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PARTISAN REVIEW 2

NEW DIRECTIONS IN MODERN THOUGHT
edited by Daniel Bell

The Turn to Interpretation
Daniel Bell

Philosophy: On Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty
Mark Lilla

Economics: On Hirschman, Schelling, and Sen
Michael McPherson

Law: On Dworkin, Kennedy, and Ely
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John E. Tashjean
Borkenau: The Rediscovery of a Thinker

REVIEWS
Charles Taylor
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The Last Generation

THREE LETTERS
Richard Lowenthal: Berlin
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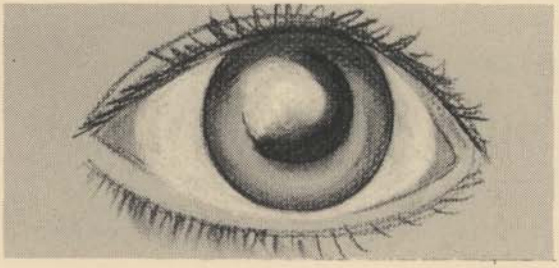

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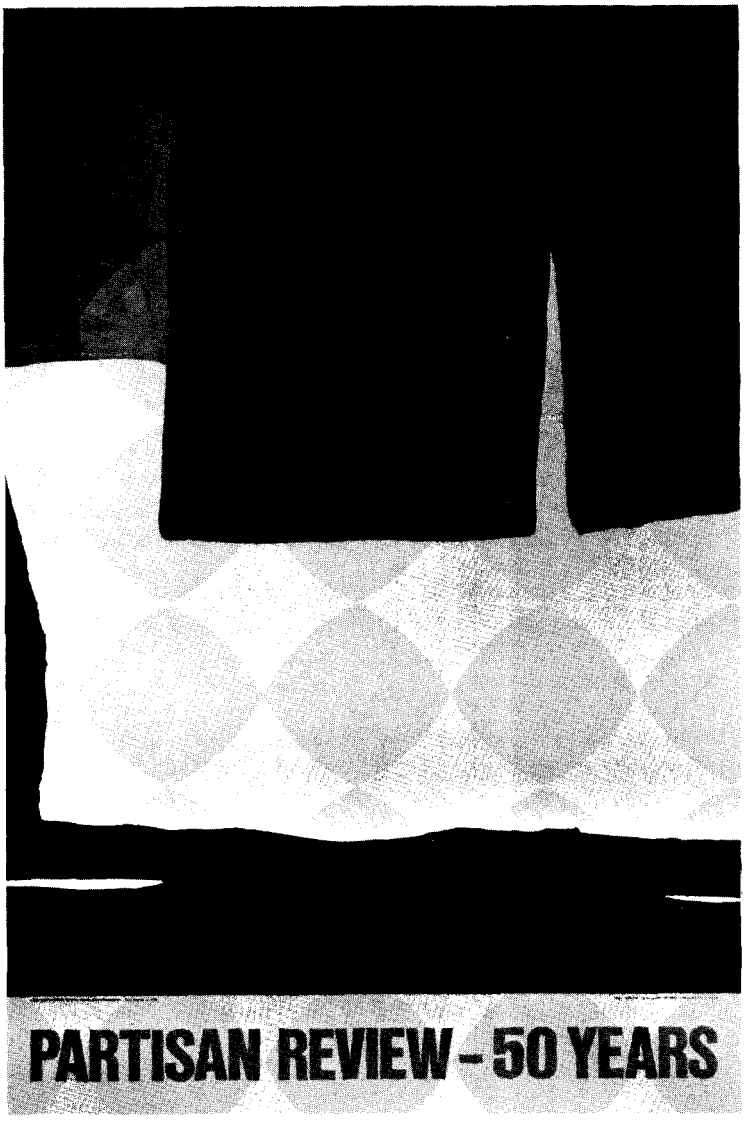

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CONTRIBUTORS

MICHEL TOURNIER is the recipient of the Grand Prix du Roman and Prix Goncourt for his novels published in French; *The Fetishist* is forthcoming from Doubleday. . . . **RICHARD LÖWENTHAL** is Professor of Political Science Emeritus at the Free University of Berlin. . . . **DIANA PINTO** writes on postwar Europe and America and teaches at L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales in Paris. . . . **DAVID TWERSKY** is editor of *Spectrum,* an Israeli Labour Party monthly, and a contributor to *The Jerusalem Post.* . . . **MARK LILLA** is executive editor of *The Public Interest.* . . . Associate Professor of Economics at Williams College, **MICHAEL McPHERSON** is co-editor of the journal, *Economics and Philosophy.* . . . **SANFORD LEVINSON** is Professor of Law at the University of Texas at Austin. . . . **HILARY PUTNAM** is Walter Beverly Pearson Professor of Modern Mathematics and Mathematical Logic at Harvard University; three volumes of his philosophical papers have been published by Cambridge University Press. . . . **NELSON GOODMAN** is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Harvard University. . . . **JOHN E. TASHJEAN** is president of Conflict Morphology, Inc., a research corporation in Arlington, Virginia. . . . Professor of Philosophy and Political Science at McGill University and former Chichele Professor of Political Philosophy at Oxford, **CHARLES TAYLOR** is the author of, among other books, *The Explanation of Behavior* and *Hegel.* . . . **ROBERT AMDUR** teaches political science at Columbia University and is working on a book about freedom of speech. . . . **ROBERT M. SOLOW's** most recent book is *Paul Samuelson and Modern Economic Theory;* he is Institute Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. **MARY LEFKOWITZ,** Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College, is author of *Heroines and Hysterics* and co-editor of *Women's Life in Greece and Rome.*

This issue of *Partisan Review* was partially funded by support from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Editor's Note

In the last issue, it was not mentioned that the *Reminiscences* by Manès Sperber were part of his three-volume autobiography that appeared in France and Germany.

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COMMENT

THE LAST GENERATION. Four towering European intellectuals, the best and last of the generation, are now gone. Manès Sperber and Raymond Aron died in the last few months; Arthur Koestler a year ago; Ignazio Silone just a few years before. They were also personal friends, and friends of *Partisan Review*. Each in his own way, and in his own medium, was enormously gifted. Three of the four, Sperber, Koestler, and Silone had been antifascist exiles from Austria, Germany and Italy; and only Silone returned to his native home. Aron was, for a long time, a lonely and minority figure in France. Each one's achievement was larger than could be measured by the books they wrote.

Important as their accomplishments were individually, this is not what distinguished them and makes their passing so sad. What is significant is that it marks the end of a distinctive European intellectual generation.* Except for a few remaining figures such as Czeslaw Milosz and Stephen Spender, they were the last of a generation that embodied the central modern experience of fascism and communism. Hence their writing and what they stood for was informed by a sense of political and cultural fate. They knew more than their contemporaries. They were wiser. They had no illusions, either Utopian or of *Realpolitik*. Having seen the Medusa's head, they had no truck with the ideologies of right or left. They were not seduced by nationalist creeds. And they were not deceived by popular fronts, Eurocommunism, emotional peace movements, third world slogans, and other such contemporary crusades. They were tough-minded as anticommunists and antifascists. But they never wholly embraced the one just in order to combat the other. They were genuinely independent in their thought, committed to a liberal society as the basis of freedom.

Manès Sperber, whose loss is freshest in our minds, was the most "rounded" of the four. Perhaps because I was closest to him, I feel that loss most keenly. He had a personal warmth, a capacity for friendship, an elementary decency, and a lack of malice. He enjoyed being an old-fashioned patriarch, and acted that way to those he

*One can note, too, the sad passing in London this year as well, of Leonard Schapiro, the foremost historian and analyst of Soviet Communism.

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knew. And, as a matriarch, there was his lovely wife Jenka, who made us welcome in the family. Sperber had been a professor of psychology and an Adlerian analyst. But he was primarily a novelist (whose trilogy, *The Burned Bramble, The Abyss,* and *Journey Without End* remains the most penetrating set of novels about the Communist movement we have), an essayist and a political figure. His recently published three-volume autobiography was widely acclaimed on publication in German and French (a section of it appeared in *Partisan Review* 1, 1984), and just before his death he had been awarded the German Peace Prize at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The intellectual core of his life was his unyielding opposition to the totalitarianism of the right and the left. He was, in temperament and tone, an *alter kaempfer.*

Raymond Aron, the coolest and the most systematic thinker of the four, was a sociologist and journalist who, especially in his later years, had an enormous influence both on intellectual opinion and on policy makers. Perhaps more than any other French political theorist, Aron can be credited with breaking the hold of Stalinism on French intellectuals. Throughout the late forties, fifties, and sixties, it was a rear-guard battle, as Aron isolated himself from the fashionable modes of French thought. For years, he fought Sartre (an old school comrade) as Sartre flirted with communism; and this was no easy task as Sartre was a brilliant essayist and Pied Piper for the intelligentsia of postwar France. But by the seventies and eighties, Aron's stature and influence had grown immensely, and he had become a balancing force against the "new philosophers" who had become somewhat neoconservative, and the extreme intellectual right, which he detested.

Arthur Koestler, in his range and mercurial moods, perhaps the most representative figure of the European intelligentsia, was also probably the most single important figure among those who first challenged the illusions held by the left about the Soviet Union. *Darkness at Noon,* in its description of the black logic of communism, and of the reasons that led the old Bolsheviks to "confess" at the Moscow Trials, revealed the premises of totalitarian rule that George Orwell elaborated in *1984.* A talented journalist, Koestler made his reputation with a slew of political novels and a set of autobiographical volumes which illuminate the history of his generation. In the last decades, weary of political battles, he returned to a first love, the writing about science and the explorations of the sources of creativity, as well as some of the further reaches of parapsychology. Whether

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those later writings will stand up is an open question. His book *The Sleepwalkers,* about Copernicus and Kepler, is a triumph of historical writing. He was uncannily sensitive to the zeitgeist.

Ignazio Silone had gone into exile when Mussolini came to power. For a number of years, he directed the Communist underground in Italy and had been, with Togliatti, a leader of the Party. His disillusionment was registered most sensitively in that marvelous novel, *Bread and Wine.* Thereafter, he was primarily a novelist, though his book, *The School for Dictators* is a masterpiece about the manipulation of mass psychology. His novels, largely pastoral in their settings, sensitive to the concerns of ordinary people, touched also on the mysteries of religion. With Nicola Chiaromonte (who died a few years before him), he edited *Tempo Presente* which for many years was the political voice of anticommunist sanity in Italy. But he was essentially a brooding, lonely figure who gave the impression of being consumed by his inner life.

All four men knew each other, had been friends, and despite their different temperaments and talents, were engaged in a common intellectual enterprise, initially in the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Aside from their politics, what all four—Sperber, Aron, Koestler, and Silone—also had in common, and what distinguished them from other European writers, was their cosmopolitanism. They were free of any national parochialisms (though Aron was a strong French patriot). Three were Jews, which may have much to do with the shaping of their intellectual outlook. But there was something else: they were an intellectual and literary generation that had a political mind. It was a unique combination, created out of the crucible and horrors of Auschwitz and the Holocaust, the destruction of an idealistic Communist generation, and the Gulag. Some of these sensibilities are present in Russian exiles today—in Siniavski, in Kopelov, and in Solzhenitsyn. But that older generation also had a freer and larger philosophical range. Against that combination, the writings and comments of the "academics" and the "experts" understandably pale.

One could never wish for such a generation to emerge again at the cost which the old one had to pay. Sperber, Aron, Koestler, and Silone were the intellectual survivors. We mourn them with a sadness we can hardly express. We were fortunate to know them. And we can best serve their memory by telling their story.

W.P.

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FICTION

Michel Tournier

The Red Dwarf

for Jean-Pierre Rudin

When Lucien Gagnere reached the age of twenty-five he had to give up with a broken heart all hope of ever becoming any taller than the four-feet-one he had already reached eight years before. All he could do now was have recourse to special shoes whose platform soles gave him the extra four inches that elevated him from the dwarf category to that of the small man. As the years went by, his vanishing adolescence and youth left him exposed as a stunted adult who inspired mockery and scorn in the worst moments, pity in the less bad ones, but never respect or fear, in spite of the enviable position he occupied in the office of an important Paris lawyer.

His speciality was divorce and, not being able to dream of marriage for himself, he applied himself with avenging ardor to the task of destroying the marriages of other people. This was why he one day received a visit from Mrs. Edith Watson. A first marriage to an American had left this former opera singer extremely wealthy, and she had then married a lifeguard from Nice who was much younger than she. It was this second union that she now wished to dissolve and, through the numerous and confused grievances she had against her Bob, Lucien scented secrets and humiliations that more than interested him. He felt personally concerned in the wreck of this couple, even more so, perhaps, since he had had a chance to see Bob. The young man was a colossus, with a sweet, naïve face—like an athletic girl, Lucien thought—a beautiful, golden pulpy fruit on the beach, designed to arouse all kinds of appetites.

Lucien prided himself on his literary talents and was most meticulous in refining the style of the insulting letters which, according to French law, couples have to exchange in order to achieve an

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Editor's Note: From the book, *The Fetishist,* by Michel Tournier. English translation copyright © 1983 by Doubleday & Co., Inc. and Wm. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. To be published by Doubleday & Co. Inc.

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amiable separation. This time he surpassed himself, and Bob was horrified by the vulgarity and violence of the letters which, over several months, he dictated to him and had him sign. They even included unqualified death threats.

Some time later, Lucien went to visit his client, who lived in a luxurious duplex apartment on the borders of the Bois de Boulogne, to get her signature to some documents. A spiral staircase joined the upper apartment, where Bob was still living, to the lower one, which was enhanced by a vast terrace. That was where he found Edith Watson, practically naked on a chaise longue, surrounded by refreshments. The radiance of that big, golden body, with its violent odor of woman and suntan lotion, intoxicated Lucien—and it seemed *to intoxicate Edith herself, though she didn't care a fig about her* visitor, and answered his questions in an absent-minded, far-off voice. The heat was stifling, and Lucien was extremely uncomfortable in his dark, thick, notary's clerk's clothes, and all the more so in that the ice-cold beer Edith had offered him on his arrival had immediately drenched him in sweat. The last straw was that it had also made him want to urinate, and he was twisting and turning like a woodlouse in the hollow of the big deck chair he had coiled up in. Finally, in a painstaking voice, he asked where the lavatory was, and Edith answered with a vague gesture toward the interior and some muttered words; the only one he could make out was "bathroom."

The room seemed immense to Lucien. It was all black marble, with a bathtub sunk into the floor. There were various nickeled appliances, spotlights, a super scale, and above all a profusion of mirrors which sent his image back to him at most unusual angles. He pissed, and then began to luxuriate in this cool spot. The bathtub, which looked like something between a pitfall, a tomb, and a snake pit, didn't attract him in the least, but he hovered around the shower basin which was surrounded by slabs of frosted glass. A whole battery of jets converged in it, and it seemed that you could spray yourself with water not only from above but also from the front, from the back, from the sides, and also vertically from below. There was a complicated set of faucets to regulate these jets.

Lucien undressed and began to switch on the various sprinklers; their direction, violence, and temperature surprised him, like aggressive practical jokes. Then he smeared himself in a light, perfumed lather which he sprayed on with an aerosol, and remained in the multiple shower for quite a while. He was enjoying himself. For

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the first time he saw his body as something other than a shameful, repulsive object. When he jumped out of the shower onto the rubber mat he discovered that he was immediately surrounded by a whole crowd of Luciens imitating his movements in a labyrinth of mirrors. Then they stood still and looked at one another. Their face had an indisputable air of rather majestic gravity—sovereign was the word that occurred to Lucien—with a wide, rectangular forehead, a steady, imperious gaze, a fleshy sensual mouth, and it did not even lack that slight touch of flabbiness in the lower part of the face which suggested incipient jowls of impressive nobility. After that, everything began to deteriorate, for the neck was disproportionately long, the torso as round as a ball, the legs short and bandy, like those of a gorilla, and the enormous penis cascaded in black and purple waves down to the knees.

But it was time to think of getting dressed. Lucien glanced in disgust at the dark, sweaty pile of his clothes, then he noticed a huge crimson bathrobe hanging from a chrome peg. He took it down, draped it around him until he was completely hidden within its folds, and then, with the aid of the mirrors, he devised a dignified, casual bearing. He wondered whether he would put his shoes on. This was a crucial question, for if he relinquished the four inches of his platform soles he would be confessing, and even proclaiming, to Edith Watson that he was a dwarf and not merely a small man. The discovery of an elegant pair of Turkish slippers under a stool decided him. When he made his entrance onto the terrace, the long train formed by the outsize bathrobe gave him an imperial air.

The big sunglasses concealing Edith's face made it impossible for him to see what she was thinking, and it was only her sudden immobility, when the majestic little personage appeared and with a kind of weasel leap buried himself in the depths of a canopied deckchair, that betrayed her stupefaction. The notary's clerk had disappeared and given place to a comical, disquieting creature of overwhelming, betwitching ugliness, to a fabulous monster, whose comic aspect added a negative, acid, destructive component.

"That's Bob's bathrobe," she murmered, in order to say something, in a tone that was half protest, half simple observation.

"I can just as well do without it," Lucien replied insolently.

And, throwing off the bathrobe, he sank down onto the ground like an insect emerging from a flower, and in the same movement started climbing up Edith's chaise lounge.

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Lucien was a virgin. His awareness of his infirmity had stifled the cries of his nascent puberty. He discovered love that day, and his abandon of his clerk's clothing and especially of his built-up shoes, and his acceptance of his dwarf category were in his mind inseparable from this dazzling revelation. As for Edith—who was only getting a divorce because of the inadequacy of her too-handsome husband—she was enchanted to discover that such a small, misshapen body should be so fantastically equipped, and so delightfully efficacious.

This was the beginning of a liaison whose passion was entirely physical and to which Lucien's infirmity added a slightly shameful, sophisticated piquancy for her, and a pathetic tension mixed with anguish for him. They were both agreed to throw a veil of absolute secrecy over their relationship. Apart from the fact that Edith wouldn't have had the courage to display such a strange lover to the world, he had explained to her that it was of paramount importance to her divorce for her conduct to appear irreproachable until the case came to court.

From then on, Lucien led a double life. To all appearances he was still a small man, dressed in somber clothes and built-up shoes, whom his colleagues saw every day pen pushing at his big desk, but at certain irregular capricious hours—determined by coded telephone messages—he disappeared into the block by the Bois de Boulogne, went up to the duplex apartment to which he had a key and there, metamorphosed into an imperial dwarf, willful, swaggering, desirous, and desired, he subjected the big blonde with the sophisticated accent, whose drug he was, to the law of pleasure. His embrace sent her into ecstasies, and her love song, which usually began with guttural trills, and rapturous flourishes, extending over three octaves, always culminated in a volley of affectionate, obscene abuse. She would call her lover my bauble, my lounge lizard, my ass-scratcher, my dildo. . . . After the storm she would make him a speech from which it emerged that he was nothing but a penis with organs around it, a walking penis, and, now calling him my pendant, my lubricity belt, she pretended to be going about her business in the house while carrying him around, clinging to her flank, the way female monkeys carry their young.

He let her say and do what she liked, and, while being bounced up and down by his "dwarf-carrier" as he called her in retaliation, he would amuse himself watching her breasts wobbling above his

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head like a couple of tethered balloons. Yet he was terrified of losing her, and it was with anguish that he wondered whether the pleasure he gave her was great enough to make up for the satisfaction of the social life that he could not offer her. His long experience of divorce cases had taught him that women are more social beings than men, and that they can only really blossom in an atmosphere that contains plenty of human relationships. Wouldn't she one day abandon him for some prestigious—or at least presentable—lover?

A period of inexplicable silence ensued. He had been trained not to go to the Bois de Boulogne unless Edith called him. For a whole, long week, she gave no sign of life. He fretted in silence, then began to vent his feelings in violent outbursts of aggression against the office juniors. Never had the letters of rupture he dictated to his clients been so venomous. Finally he simply had to find out, and went to visit his mistress on his own initiative. He did find out, and without delay. Silently opening the door with his key, he stole into the vestibule. He heard voices. He had no difficulty in recognizing them as those of Edith and Bob, who seemed to be on the best of terms—the most affectionate of terms, even.

The blow was all the more severe in that it was totally unexpected. Had the couple become reconciled? Was there now some doubt about the divorce? This reversion made Lucien feel not only that he had been rejected by his mistress, but that he was being thrust back into his former life and frustrated of the marvelous metamorphosis that had changed his destiny. He was overwhelmed with murderous hatred, and it took a violent effort to force himself to hide under a shelf when Edith and Bob came out of the bedroom, laughing, and made for the door. When the sound of the elevator had died away, Lucien came out of his hiding place and almost automatically went over to the bathroom. He undressed, took a shower, and then, draped in Bob's big crimson bathrobe, sat down on a stool where, stock-still, he waited.

Three hours later the door banged and Edith came in alone, humming. She called out something up the inner stairway, which indicated Bob's presence on the upper floor. Suddenly, she went into the bathroom without switching on the light. Lucien had let the bathrobe slip down off his shoulders. In one bound he was on her, clutching her flank as usual, but his two hands, powerful as a bulldog's jaws, had closed around her throat. Edith staggered, then rallied, and, weighed down by her mortal burden, took a few steps

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into the apartment. Finally she halted, seemed to hesitate, and then collapsed. While she was in her death throes Lucien possessed her for the last time.

None of this was premeditated, and yet from then on his acts followed one another as if they were part of a long-matured plan. He dressed, and rushed back to his office. Then he returned to the apartment with the insulting, threatening letters he had dictated to Bob and put them in a drawer in Edith's dresser. Finally he went home and immediately dialed Bob's number. The telephone rang for a long time. At last a grumpy, sleepy voice answered.

"Murderer! You've strangled your wife!" was all that Lucien said, in a disguised voice. Then he repeated this accusation three times, for Bob was showing the most obtuse lack of understanding.

Two days later the papers carried this news item and went on to say that the suspect number one—the victim's husband, whose letters found at the scene of the crime left no doubt about his intentions—had taken to flight, but that his arrest was no doubt imminent.

Lucien dissimulated himself within his character of the ill-favored clerk, a suffering, mocked little man, but the memory of the superman he had become through renouncing the extra four inches his special shoes added to his height haunted him day and night. Because he had finally had the courage of his own monstrosity, he had seduced a woman. She had deceived him. He had killed her, and his rival, the husband, doubling as a ridiculous tall man, was everywhere being hunted by the police! His life was a masterpiece, and there were moments when he was overwhelmed with breathtaking joy at the thought that he only had to take his shoes off to become immediately what he really was, a man apart, superior to the gigantic riffraff, an irresistible seducer and infallible killer! All the misery of the past years was due to his having refused the fearsome choice that was his destiny. In cowardly fashion he had shrunk from crossing the Rubicon into dwarfism, as he might have hesitated at the threshold of a temple. But he had finally dared to take the step. The slight quantitative difference that he had accepted in deciding to reject his platform shoes in Edith's bathroom had brought about a radical qualitative metamorphosis. The horrible quality of dwarfism had infused him and turned him into a fabulous monster. In the grayness of the lawyer's office where he spent his days he was haunted by dreams of despotism. By chance, he had read a document

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about Ravensbrück and Birkenau, the Nazi concentration camps reserved for women. He saw himself as the Kommandant, the governor, controlling with his huge whip vast troops of naked, wounded women—and it was no rare event for the typists to be surprised by hearing him roar.

But the secret of his new dignity lay heavy on him. He would have liked to adopt it in the face of the whole world. He dreamed of a conspicuous, public, devastating proclamation in front of an ecstatic crowd. He went to his tailor and ordered a dark red leotard that emphasized the curves of his muscles and genitals. Back in his office he shed the livery of the little clerk, took a shower, and put on what he privately called his evening clothes, to which he added a mauve silk scarf tied tightly around his long neck, like the old style Apaches. Then, wearing moccasins with thin, pliant soles, he slipped out. He had discovered the superior comfort his height afforded him. He could pass under the lowest doorways with his head held high. He could stand upright in the smallest cars. Every seat was a spacious nest for him. The glasses and plates in bistros and restaurants offered him ogres' portions. He was surrounded by abundance in all circumstances. Soon he became aware of the colossal strength accumulated in his muscles. He quickly became known in various nightclubs where the habitués would invite him to drink with them. He would jump up and perch on a high stool at the counter, and he could stand on his hands with his short legs crossed in the air, like arms. One night, a customer who had had too much to drink insulted him. Lucien threw him onto the gound and twisted his ankle, then stood on him and started jumping up and down on his face with a rage that terrified the onlookers. The same day a prostitute offered herself to him for nothing, out of curiosity, because the sight of his strength had excited her. From then on men were afraid of the red dwarf, and women submitted to the obscure fascination emanating from him. His vision of society began to change. He was the unshakeable center of a crowd of feeble, cowardly, stilt-walkers who were unsteady on their limbs and had nothing to offer their women but the genitals of a marmoset.

But this limited renown was to be merely a prelude. One evening, in a bar in Pigalle, after he had just won a bet by tearing in half a pack of fifty-two cards, he was accosted by a man with a swarthy face and black, curly hair, whose hands were adorned with dia-

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monds. He introduced himself: Signor Silvio d'Urbino, the owner of the Urbino Circus, whose big top was at the Port Dorée for a week. Would the red dwarf agree to join his troupe? Lucien grabbed a glass carafe, intending to smash it into smithereens on the head of the insolent fellow. Then he had second thoughts. His imagination had just shown him a vast crater in which the spectators' heads were squeezed together like granules of caviar, rising up in terraces around a harshly lit ring. From his crater a mighty, continuous, and interminable ovation burst over the head of a minuscule individual dressed in red, standing alone in the center of the ring. He accepted.

For the first months Lucien was content to liven up the interludes between the acts. He would run along the circular platform around the ring, get entangled in the apparatus, run away with shrill cries when threatened by one of the exasperated men in the ring. Finally he would allow himself to be caught in the folds of the acrobats' big mats and the men would carry him off unceremoniously, a large hump in the middle of the rolled-up sheet.

The laughter he aroused in the audience elated him rather than hurt him. It was no longer the concrete, savage, individual laughter that had terrorized him before his metamorphosis. It was a stylized, esthetic, ceremonial, collective laughter, a veritable declaration of love, expressing the deference of the female crowd to the artiste who subjugates her. And in any case, this laughter turned into applause whenever Lucien reappeared in the ring as the alchemist's lead turns into gold in the depths of his crucible.

But Lucien wearied of this petty buffoonery, which was nothing but exercises and experiments. One day his comrades saw him wriggling into something that looked like a pair of pink plastic dungarees shaped like a giant hand. A finger, ending in a nail, corresponded to his head, his two arms and his two legs. His torso was its palm, and sticking out behind was the stump of a truncated wrist. This enormous, terrifying organ revolved by supporting itself successively on each of its fingers, it sat on its wrist, it contracted when facing the spotlights, ran with nightmare speed, and even climbed up ladders and rotated around a pole or a trapeze, hanging on by one finger. The children roared with laughter, and the women had a catch in their throats at the approach of this enormous pink-fleshed spider. The press of the entire world spoke of the giant hand act.

But Lucien was still not completely satisfied by this fame. He

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felt there was something lacking, something was incomplete. He was waiting—not impatiently, but confidently—for something, perhaps, though more probably for someone.

The Urbino Circus had already been on tour for five months when it pitched its tents in Nice. It was to stay there a week, and then cross the frontier back to its native Italy. The evening performance of the third day had been brilliant, and the giant hand act had been a sensation. Lucien had removed his makeup and was relaxing in the luxurious mobile home he had been promoted to since his great success, when he heard a soft knock at a window. He put the light out and went over to the looped curtains framing a pallid rectangle. A tall, massive silhouette was outlined against the phosphorescent sky. Lucien half-opened the window.

"Who is it?"

"I'd like to speak to M. Gagnero."

"But who *is* it?"

"It's me, Bob."

Lucien was so overcome by emotion that he had to sit down. He knew now what he'd been waiting for, whom he had come to look for in Nice. He had been keeping a kind of rendezvous, a rendezvous with Edith Watson. He let Bob in, and the awkward mass of the water-skier immediately filled all the space of the narrow abode in which Lucien was perfectly at his ease. Once again he despised stilt-walkers, who are nowhere in their right place.

Bob explained his situation in a whisper. Ever since Edith's death he had led a hunted existence in sunbaked attics or dank cellars, fed like an animal by his mother and a friend. He was obsessed with the temptation to give himself up to the police, but just the very idea of being remanded in custody terrified him, and, worse still, there were those accursed letters of rupture, full of threats to kill her, which made his case look even blacker. But Lucien could testify that it was he who had dictated these letters to Bob for the purposes of his divorce, and that the threats they contained were fictitious—purely conventional.

Lucien fully savored his omnipotence over this giant with the girlish face. Curled up in the hollow of a nest of cushions, his only regret was that he didn't smoke—a pipe, in particular—for then, before replying, he would have taken infinite time in cleaning it, then filling it, and finally lighting it, according to all the rules of the art.

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For want of a pipe, he closed his eyes and allowed himself a good minute of voluptuous, smiling, Buddhist reflection.

"The police are looking for you," he finally said. "It would be my duty to denounce you. I'll give some thought to what I can do for you. But I need proof that you have total, blind confidence in me. It's very simple, then. Go back to your hiding place. Come back tomorrow at the same time. There won't be any trap. That'll prove that you have confidence in me. Then we shall be united in a pact. You're quite free not to come back."

The next day, Bob was there.

"You can't rely on my giving evidence about the letters," Lucien told him. "But I have something better to offer you. The day after tomorrow we'll be crossing the frontier into Italy. I'll take you with me."

Bob fell on his knees in the caravan and kissed his hands.

It was child's play for Lucien to smuggle him over the frontier by hiding him in his bed. He insisted that he should stay hidden during the circus's stops at San Remo, Imperia, and Savone. He waited until Genoa to introduce him to Signor d'Urbino as a friend met by chance in the crowd, with whom he intended to stage a new act. They started work right away.

The enormous difference in their height in itself suggested several classic numbers. One such mime act was the battle of David and Goliath, to which Lucien had added a finale of his own invention. After the giant had fallen onto the ground, his conqueror blew him up with a bicycle pump. From then on he was an obese, docile, flabby pachyderm, rolling from one side of the arena to the other at the mercy of the dwarf who handled and manhandled him. He put him to various personal uses: as a pneumatic mattress to take a nap on, as a trampoline to leap up into the apparatus, as a punching bag. And the colossus was always ridiculed and trounced by his minuscule adversary. Finally Lucien perched himself astride his neck and put on an enormous overcoat that covered Bob right down to his ankles. And they perambulated in this fashion, having become a single man eight-feet-two tall, Bob blinded and obliterated by the coat, Lucien perched on high, imperious and wrathful.

It was when they reverted to the great tradition of the whiteface clown and the August that their entrance took on its definitive form and crowned Lucien's triumph. The whiteface clown, made up, titi-

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vated, wearing pumps, his calves bulging in silk stockings, had formerly had the ring to himself and dazzled the audience with his wit and elegance. But he had been foolish enough to want to find a foil, to set off his beauty and éclat, and the hilarious, vulgar August, with his tippler's face—invented for this purpose—had gradually supplanted him. Lucien extended this development by turning his overrefined partner into his thing, his whipping boy. And yet nothing was too splendid for Bob. The dwarf dressed him in a platinum wig, he added cascades of ribbons, embroidery, lace, swansdown, to his costume. Finally, carried away by the logic of his number, he imagined the grotesque marriage, to the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, of this enormous girl decked out in snowy white, to the minute red toad who kept jumping up at her dress, croaking. At the end of the number he leaped up like a dog, circled his partner's waist with his short legs, and in this fashion she carried him off into the wings, to thunderous applause.

This final leap disturbed Lucien deeply, because it reminded him painfully and voluptuously of the stranglehold that had killed Edith Watson. Were not Bob and he united by their love for the former singer? Lucien used to speak of her to Bob in the evenings, and then, obsessed by her memory, he finally confused her with his companion, and as it was even more important to him to subjugate and humiliate the stilt-walkers than to take their wives away from them, it happened one night, then every night, that he climbed into the side-berth of the mobile home in which his former rival slept, and possessed him like a female.

Later, the imperial theme, first sketched out in Bob's crimson bathrobe, once again took possession of him. Nothing was more in keeping with the clown tradition than to develop the August—the name itself suggested it—into a parody of a Roman emperor. Lucien draped himself in a red tunic that left his crooked, muscular thighs naked. He wore a necklet and a crown of roses. He was no longer the August, he was Nero, gag-Nero, as he was one day called by d'Urbino, who was always on the lookout for slogans and texts for his playbills. As for Bob, he quite naturally became Agrippina. The fact that Nero had had his mother murdered, after having taken her as his first mistress seemed a good omen to Lucien (Lucius Nero) who, not having found his place among decent, everyday models, was always willing to find inspiration in the grandiose turpitudes of Antiquity. It pleased him that his life should have taken the form of a

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caricature of stilt-walkers' morals, highly colored and spattered with blood and sperm.

"The one thing that bothers me," he said one night as he left Bob to go back to his own little bed, "is that, whatever we do, we shall never have a child."

This thought was certainly charged with its weight of brutal cynicism, but it was nonetheless secretly inspired by a recent discovery that was to mark a new turning point in his destiny. He had noticed that while the adulation of the ordinary public had no noticeable influence on the ball of hatred that weighed hard and heavy in his breast, a warm, springlike breath did sometimes seem to reach him from the tiers, and particularly from the very top of the tiers, *from the last benches hidden in the shadows of the big top.* From then on he waited passionately for this breath which touched, moved, and blessed him, and tried to discover in which of the performances it manifested itself. Now it was always during the matinees, and on Thursdays rather than on Sundays, Thursday being at that time the day when children didn't go to school.

"I'd like it," he said to d'Urbino one evening, "if once a week at least the circus refused to admit anyone over the age of twelve."

The director showed extreme surprise at this demand, but he respected the whims of those stars whose inventive genius had led to profitable and spectacular innovations.

"We could start on December 24, Christmas Eve," the dwarf added.

The date was so close and the danger so precise that d'Urbino began to worry.

"But why, my dear Maestro, but what an idea, under the age of twelve, but what does that mean?"

Once again Lucien felt himself in the grip of his old, malevolent wrath, and he advanced menacingly on the director.

"That means that for once I shall have an audience of my own size! Can't you understand? I don't want any stilt-walkers—not a single one!"

"But, but, but," d'Urbino stammered, "if we refuse to admit adults and adolescents it'll cost us an enormous amount of money!"

Lucien's reply rooted him to the spot—Lucien who was always so prodigiously grasping.

"I'll pay!" he announced dogmatically. "We'll have the cashier work out how much you'll lose and you can deduct it from my pay.

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And in any case, for the matinee on December 24 it's very simple—I'll buy all the seats. Entrance will be free . . . for children."

This Christmas performance was to remain memorable in the history of the circus. Children flooded in from several leagues around, whole coachloads of them in some cases, because schools, reformatories, and orphanages had been notified. Some mothers who were refused entry had the idea of tying their children together so that they shouldn't get lost, and roped parties of five, six, and even seven brothers and sisters were to be seen climbing up onto the tiers.

What act the red dwarf performed that day no one will ever know because it was witnessed by no one but children, and he swore them to secrecy. At the end of the show they gave him a tremendous ovation and he, standing squarely in the sawdust on his immovable legs, his eyes closed with bliss—he allowed himself to be submerged in this storm of tenderness, this tempest of sweetness, which cleansed him of his bitterness, justified him, illuminated him. Then, children in their thousands surged into the ring, surrounded him in a tumultuous, caressing floodtide, and carried him off in triumph and in song.

Behind the red and gold curtains leading to the stables, the riders, the tamer, the Chinese conjurers, the flying trapeze artists, the Nepalese jugglers, and behind them the tall, grotesque silhouette of Agrippina, all retreated, effaced themselves, amazed by this savage hymn.

"Let him be," said d'Urbino. "He's with his own kind, he's being fêted by his own people. For the first time in his life, maybe, he is no longer alone. As for me, I have my slogan: Lucius Gag-Nero, emperor of children. I can already see my playbill: the Red Dwarf in a toga with his sword and crown, and with the crowd, the immense crowd of little people, not one of whom is a fraction of an inch taller than him! But what a matinee, my friends, what a matinee!"

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THREE LETTERS

Richard Löwenthal

I. LETTER FROM BERLIN: NEUTRALISM AND NATIONALISM

In the course of the last two years, the evolution of public opinion in the Federal Republic of Germany has become a cause of major concern to its allies—particularly, but not exclusively, to the United States and France. The immediate and visible cause of this concern has been the strength of the popular opposition to the stationing of United States nuclear weapons of intermediate range—both Pershing II and Cruise Missiles—in fulfillment of the "double-track decision" taken by NATO in December 1979, largely on the initiative of the then West German government and its Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and particularly the massive turn of the German Social Democratic party, now in opposition, to reject such stationing with a crushing majority.

The questions being asked among the Federal Republic's Western allies are whether the political and cultural decision for alignment with the West, freely and clearly taken by the West Germans between the end of Hitler's war and their joining of the Atlantic alliance, is proving to have been superficial and unreliable; whether a growing number of Germans are falling back into the dream of a special and unique political and cultural role of Germany between East and West; whether their attitude to the superpowers is becoming "equidistant," tending to ignore the fundamental difference between the political systems of the United States and the Soviet Union; and whether the political changes we are watching are in fact the beginning of a German turn towards a new, neutralist nationalism, based on a renewed search for a national identity.

I propose to show that the root cause of the change in the West German political landscape is not a cultural change in West German mentality, but an objective change in the conditions of the Federal Republic's military security; that both past errors in the political guidance of West German public opinion and recent errors in the image of the United States security policy conveyed by the present

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United States administration have made the subjective effects of that objective change on the German public much worse than they would otherwise have been; that the resulting West German peace movement has been basically motivated by fear, including fear of an incalculable United States policy, but only in a minority section by "neutralist" tendencies and only quite marginally by nationalist dreams; and that the first steps for overcoming the crisis, so far as they depend on the Germans, may already be in the process of being taken—and taken not only on the side of the present government, but also of the Social Democratic opposition.

I.

From the beginning of the so-called "balance of terror" between the two nuclear superpowers, the borderline between the areas controlled by them has run along the frontier between East and West Germany. Ever since then, nuclear weapons have been stationed on both sides of that frontier—weapons over which the Germans had no control. The German people have thus lived not only for more than thirty years in a divided country, but for almost as long with nuclear weapons in the hands of opposing powers on their soil. What is remarkable is the comparative equanimity with which they have lived under those conditions until a few years ago.

One source of that equanimity on the West German side was that, until at least the middle sixties, the United States possessed a clear nuclear superiority. This meant that the Soviets had no prospect of success in a nuclear war, and the United States had no motive for it. It also meant that the Soviets were effectively deterred from even a conventional attack on a point of vital interest to the United States—such as West Germany and even West Berlin. What is called "extended deterrence," in other words, nuclear deterrence of attacks on non-American territories of vital interest to the United States, was generally regarded as credible under conditions of clear American nuclear superiority. The nuclear weapons of the United States effectively protected West Germany without having to be used.

One of these conditions ended when in the late sixties, the Soviets began to approach nuclear parity: the administration of President Nixon and Security Adviser Kissinger decided to attempt to stabilize the strategic nuclear balance by negotiations rather than engage in a destabilizing nuclear arms race. The resulting first

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SALT agreement, while imperfect, became the core of the policy of détente, of which the Ostpolitik of the German Federal Republic came to be a part. Instead of the former American nuclear superiority, the apparent stability of the nuclear balance now continued effectively to deter a nuclear war; together with the new general climate of East-West détente, it became a new reason for West German equanimity. In that climate, German opinion overlooked the fact that another aspect of the situation had changed: in a situation of nuclear balance between the United States and Russia, the credibility of "extended deterrence" of *conventional* attacks had clearly diminished.

From the middle of the 1970s, however, as negotiations about SALT II proceeded, the stability of the strategic nuclear balance began to appear doubtful, while the regional nuclear balance in Europe was clearly upset by the Soviet development of the SS 20. From the West German point of view, acceptance of the new situation in the absence of fully credible "extended deterrence" meant becoming open to nuclear blackmail. However, stationing corresponding United States weapons in Western Europe, including Western Germany, would not only increase the credibility of "extended deterrence," but might also carry the risk of a nuclear arms race in a situation of unstable balance—a situation that had never before existed. NATO's "double-track" decision of December 1979, urged by the West Europeans, including the West German government of Helmut Schmidt, was an effort to avoid both dangers by convincing the Soviets that their superiority in the European nuclear balance would not be tolerated, but that an arms race could still be avoided by agreeing on a stable balance in that theater.

Yet from the moment that the threat of the SS 20s had become obvious, the threat of a nuclear arms race in an unstable balance was bound to remain until an agreement on a stable balance was reached. At the same time, the sense of reduced credibility of United States "extended deterrence" was also bound to remain, pending the stationing of United States intermediate-range missiles in Europe. But a nuclear arms race in an unstable situation implies a temptation for either side to attempt a nuclear first strike when it feels temporarily superior but is afraid the situation might be reversed tomorrow. Owing to the improbability of either side becoming sufficiently superior to the other for an annihilating first strike, and to the necessary uncertainty of each side's estimates of the strength of its opponent, it

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remains highly *unlikely* that either would yield to a temptation implying such tremendous risks—all the more so as neither superpower is governed by men sharing Hitler's mad belief that he must win the world now or never. But it is no longer logically *impossible*, as it was in the past.

This double uncertainty, implied both in the reduced credibility of "extended deterrence" and in a nuclear arms race in a situation of unstable balance, explains why, all over the free nations of the Western world, both expert groups and peace movements have begun to urge efforts to reduce or altogether abandon the dependence of security on nuclear weapons. In West Germany, where this dependence was mainly on *foreign* nuclear weapons, but had been viewed with equanimity as long as it seemed to promise total security, the uncertainty has destroyed the former equanimity of many people, and fear of a nuclear holocaust has taken its place.

It follows that the decisive motive of the German peace movement is stark fear. This does not imply that it is selfish: in most cases it is a moral fear for one's fellows as well, including the enemy—as the great influence of the movement in the churches underlines. But it does make for an irrational attitude toward the problem. I said that expert groups and peace movements in a number of Western countries are looking for ways to reduce dependence on nuclear weapons for basically the same reasons: but none of the expert groups and by no means all the peace movements favor unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons, as the German (and the British) peace movement does: those others are guided more by sober political analysis and less by irrational fear.

II.

One factor that has helped the West German peace movement to become both as strong and as irrational as it is has been a failure of political education, particularly of the young generation, about the nature and roots of the East-West conflict in the course of the past decade. On the whole, détente in the form of West German Ostpolitik under the socio-liberal coalition governments of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt has been a remarkable success—so much so that the more conservative government of Helmut Kohl is working hard to continue that policy despite the cooling of overall

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East-West relations. The success was most remarkable in the easing of contact between the people of Western and Eastern Germany—there have been millions of West German visits to the East year after year—and in the normalization of the situation of West Berlin and its inhabitants. But there were, of course, less spectacular economic advantages as well. Yet the governments of the Federal Republic never forgot that in the nature of the East-West conflict as a struggle not only between power blocs, but between political systems based on radically different principles, détente could not be a means to end the conflict, but only to control and mitigate its forms, and that defense must remain its necessary complement. As stated in the Harmel report adopted by the NATO Council in 1967, during the decade following the signing of the Moscow treaty, West German arms expenditure rose by thirty percent in real terms—while American arms expenditure did not.

I have mentioned this figure in order to show that the Western governments were aware of the continuing nature of the East-West conflict. Yet it is a hard fact that the generation growing up in the Federal Republic in the same decade was not effectively informed of the roots of this conflict and its vital importance for their lives—not in the schools, not in many of the universities or adult education institutions, and not sufficiently in the mass media. None of those institutions are administered by the federal government; the schools are under the state governments, and most of the others are wholly or at least partly autonomous. The beginning of the era of détente coincided both with a number of dilettantish educational reforms that weakened the need for historical knowledge and diluted the curriculum of democratic institutions. Also, large numbers of former activists of the students' revolt of the late sixties with strong "Marxist" leanings began to teach, and quite a few of them found their places in the electronic media. Interestingly enough, those would-be propagandists generally did *not* succeed in imbuing their pupils with their former revolutionary ideas—the situation had changed too much since the sixties. But they failed to convey to them an understanding of the institutions of democracy and often educated them in a spirit of total negativism and cynicism: while hardly any of the pupils became pro-Soviet, far too few acquired a spirit of democratic citizenship. It was natural that to young people educated in such an atmosphere, the East-West conflict appeared as a meaningless ri-

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valry between foreign powers pursuing their selfish interests—and the dangers arising from that conflict as something to be avoided at any price. Political education, however, is also a task for the parties of a democracy. At the turn toward détente, the Social Democratic Party leaders rightly felt a special responsibility to explain to their members and followers that the normalization of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union and its allies did not end the basic contrast between the Social Democratic and the Communist view of freedom, social justice, and human rights, and they arranged for the writing and printing of a basic pamphlet on "Social Democracy and Communism." The pamphlet was duly distributed, and after a brief interval a second edition appeared with a preface by Willy Brandt. But what ought to have become a continuing effort soon was forgotten, and the many thousands of new young members who joined the party in the coming years were never instructed in this spirit. They learned to defend the policy of détente, of better relations with the East, against the then still passionate opposition of the Christian Democrats; they did not learn why the conflict with the Communist world did go on. When the crisis over the stationing of nuclear missiles developed, they were easily won over by the "peace movement."

III.

Criticism of antagonistic powers, with whom negotiations have nevertheless to be conducted, often is expressed in highly aggressive language in America—not by responsible people, but by people in responsible positions. And often Americans reply to criticism of such conduct, if uttered by foreign friends of the United States, by references to "rhetoric" geared to domestic consumption. Also, highly dramatic proposals for military planning and armaments, put forward by an official in the Pentagon or even the President's Security Council, often are published by the media as sensational news about administration policy long before a decision has been made and the President is committed to them. The standard reply to foreign criticism of such practice is that the United States is an open society and that the freedom of the press to reveal such plans, whether classified or not, is part of its democratic process. But what most Americans do *not* know are the unintended and sometimes lasting effects produced abroad by those American customs.

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Perhaps the standard example of the kind of official "rhetoric" I have in mind is President Reagan's speech about the Soviet regime representing the "powers of evil." Of course it is legitimate and indeed necessary for a democratic leader to tell his people again and again that the Soviet leaders do not share our humane values, and that every expansion of their power reduces the area within which those values are recognized (if not always observed). But while it is credible that in our divided world one is often forced to negotiate with regimes that do not share our Western values, it is not credible evidence of a serious willingness to negotiate if one describes one's opponent as the representative of the devil. And the lack of credibility is bound to affect both the attitude of the country with whom we have to negotiate and the trust of friendly nations whose fate may depend on their outcome. Reported unofficial statements from the same highly-placed source about the approach of Armageddon make a similar impact. But even highly official forecasts that can hardly be classified as rhetoric, such as the repeated warnings that the Soviets were not likely to negotiate seriously before the American missiles had been actually stationed, while intended to reduce the public's trust in the proposals made by the Soviets, have in many minds undermined the trust in the seriousness of the men in Washington.

Even more effective in causing fear and distrust of United States policy among Europeans, and more particularly among Germans in their exposed geographical position, have been the numerous leaks about bright strategic ideas under discussion within the American administration—for example, about plans for making a "limited nuclear war" winnable, or about reacting to Soviet or Soviet-directed attacks in other parts of the world by striking back from NATO-territory in Europe, in contrast to the explicit limitations of the NATO alliance. In all such cases, it has been denied that such "plans" constitute United States policy, and I am convinced that the denials are true. But it could not be denied that such ideas had been discussed in high places—and for Europeans with more limited knowledge of the United States, the distinction between tentative discussions and officially adopted plans was naturally less convincing. Those stories have become not only standard ammunition of Communist anti-American propaganda in Europe, but also standard arguments of the peace movement, nourishing the fears of hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people. On a lower, but not unimportant level, the report of the popularity in America of the

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sales of "games" offering excitement by the imitation of a nuclear war in Europe (in the course of which the Federal Republic is totally destroyed) has not only helped to promote anti-American feelings over here, but has made more thoughtful Germans reflect on the psychological gulf that separates the inhabitants of a continent that has never suffered the massive destruction of modern war from their European allies who actually experienced it.

It is remarkable that at least one important secret was kept most effectively for several months, both in the Pentagon and the White House: the secret of the compromise proposal worked out by Nitze and Kwizinsky during their "Walk in the Woods" at Geneva. It was guarded so well that not a word was communicated to any of the European governments concerned, until some time after the compromise had been rejected by both Moscow and Washington. Helmut Schmidt, who was not only the single most important originator of NATO's double-track decision but remained a staunch supporter of stationing the American missiles after the negotiations failed, has told the Bundestag before its final decisive vote that he was never informed of the proposal, let alone consulted about it, while he was Chancellor. It is not surprising, therefore, that large numbers of solidly pro-Western West Germans have come to feel that they are no longer treated by Washington as allies in a common cause, but as mere pawns in a strategic game—and that, from their point of view, the double-track decision was a mistake, because it made their future security dependent on the outcome of a negotiation over which they turned out to have no influence at all.

IV.

The forces, both long-term and immediate, accounting for the —at least temporary—strength of the German peace movement, which I have tried to analyze here, may be summed up as, first, a growing sense of military insecurity giving rise to understandable, if often irrational fear; second, in a large part of the young generation, a loss of the understanding that the conflict with the Soviet Union is *not only* a conflict between two great powers and their associates, but also a conflict between freedom and tyranny; third, a widespread loss of trust in the rationality and responsibility of the conduct of United States policy by the present administration, on which the fate of the Federal Republic depends to a large extent. If one takes the

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three factors together, they seem to amount both to a sense of "equidistance" between Washington and Moscow and to a strong tendency towards "neutralism." But looking at the reality of the peace movement, one finds that different degrees of a sense of equidistance are indeed widespread, but that actual neutralism is confined to a sharply circumscribed minority. A few months before the decision to station the missiles was made, a serious poll suggested that 65 percent of the West Germans would be opposed to it; but the same poll reported a majority of 90 percent for remaining in the Atlantic alliance. How are we to account for that?

First of all, the factor of fear, the sense of insecurity, works with most West Germans *against* neutralism. It is indeed difficult to believe that a country with West Germany's resources, situated in the heart of Europe, would be more secure without allies and indeed without the presence of American troops on its soil. True, in a situation of unstable nuclear balance, the alliance has become potentially dangerous—but the situation of an exposed neutral country would be far more dangerous: the likelihood of its being attacked would be greater, not smaller. While the fear animating the German peace movement has produced strong irrational attitudes, most of its members are not *that* irrational.

Second, I said that different degrees of a sense of equidistance between Washington and Moscow are widespread in the peace movement. What I mean is that if people talk about the activities of the superpowers in distant lands, say of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and American support for the present government of El Salvador, the sense of equidistance is rather high. If they look at the conduct of the Geneva negotiations by both sides, it may still be high with a large number of people—but it is partly balanced by their knowlege that American governments and their policies change, and that previous American governments have conducted different policies to the undoubted great advantage of the Federal Republic. Finally, if people talk about immediate dangers to West Germany, there is no sense of equidistance at all: nobody fears that the Americans will bomb West Germany. The key argument of the peace movement is not that the Soviets are so peaceloving that they will never hurt us, but that the new U.S. missiles on German soil will be their first targets.

Third, the West Germans are well aware that the Atlantic alliance links them not only to the United States, but to their neigh-

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bors in Western Europe. The choice they made after the war, under the fresh impression of Hitler's horrors and of beginning Soviet occupation—an option by a Westward trek of millions, including considerable numbers of German soldiers wishing to be captured by the Western armies rather than by the Russians, long before there was any choice by votes—was an option for the long maligned Western humanity in general and not just for the American way of life in particular. Since then, countless everyday ties have developed with the people of both Western Europe and the United States—and for all the East European tourism of the last ten years, the friendships formed there have always been balanced by the strangeness of the institutions of the Soviet bloc, visible to the naked eye—even with poor political education.

There remains the specter, conjured up by some writers in the West, of a rebirth of German nationalism in neutralist guise. A few German books have been written about the crisis of German national identity, and a few intellectuals have suggested neutrality as a road to the reunification of Germany. Their echo with the West German public, including the bulk of the peace movement, has been infinitesimal. West Germans of all social strata and all political tendencies, not excepting the peace movement, have long understood that the East German state has become the cornerstone of the Soviets' European empire, and that they would never dream of permitting the German Democratic Republic to leave the Soviet bloc in order to buy the neutrality of West Germany in exchange: there has literally not been a single hint to Bonn of such a deal, official or unofficial, since 1955. It was because the West Germans had understood this that they came to support the Ostpolitik of the Socialist-liberal coalition as a second best. As there could not be a return to a single national state, there should be at least more human, cultural, and economic contacts between the two Germanys as a means to preserve the sense of a single nation. On the whole, this has been very successful despite some ups and downs—and the West Germans are satisfied with it.

Of course, the fear of a revival of German nationalism with the concept of a political and cultural position between East and West is based on the memory of Germany's political and cultural role in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century—roughly from the Napoleonic wars to the rise and fall of Hitler. It is true that Ger-

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many, which had arisen in the early middle ages as an integral, and at times a central, part of the emerging Western civilization, came in its struggle against the Napoleonic heirs of the French revolution and in the process of creating a belated national state to see herself as representing an "in-between-culture," with a special mission between "Anglo-Saxon materialism" and "Russian barbarism." This was the spirit that animated imperial Germany in World War I, that was never effectively exorcized during the Weimar Republic, and that reached its destructive climax in its synthesis with Hitler's racism—only to perish with it. For that spirit was inseparable from the belief in Germany's role as a great power and potentially a world power, and 1945 marks the historic moment when that belief was destroyed forever.

It is this fact—that the national catastrophe of 1945 brought about an irreversible change in both the political and cultural mentality of the Germans—which is so difficult to realize for non-Germans who did not actually experience the change. It was not, at first, the moral conversion after the horrors of Nazism which many Westerners were looking for; except for a minority, the moral conversion came only later, in the next generation. What was immediate, however, was the shock of being no longer a great power—and having no prospect of ever belonging to that league again. To give an emotionally neutral example, it might be compared to what happened to Sweden, which had been a great European power, after the decisive defeat of Charles XII at Poltava: suddenly, the Swedes understood that for that kind of role, there were not enough of them—and after the centuries of Swedish wars of conquest followed a peaceful age of a parliamentary regime of the aristocracy, known in Swedish history as "Freedom's Time." German national pride and militancy had finally overreached themselves under Hitler; they had been at the Atlantic coast, in Africa, and in the Caucasus—and it had all been no good. Now the end of the war not only brought defeat, occupation, and partition: it brought the rise of two superpowers, soon both equipped with nuclear weapons, and the end of great-power roles for *all* the traditional European powers. The Germans, who have overreached themselves most, understood that fundamental change more quickly and more thoroughly than those European powers who shared in the victory; but it has become true for all of them.

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But a return of Germany, even a miraculously reunited Germany, to a special role between East and West would make no sense, either politically or culturally, unless it was a great power role—and the Germans feel it in their bones that this is an anachronism. They will continue to be a part of the West, both of its culture and of its alliance, which is also the consensus of most of their fellow Germans east of the border. And no quarrels arising from transitory German movements and transitory American policies will change this fundamental fact.

V.

Many observers, both German and non-German, have expected that the stationing of the missiles in the absence of an agreement at the Geneva negotiations would be by far the most serious test yet for the internal peace and institutional stability of the second German Republic. Writing two months after the peak of the demonstrations, followed by the decisions of the Social Democratic party against stationing and that of the Bundestag in its favor, I find that so far, the test has been stood remarkably well.

The demonstrations mobilized literally millions of people, and they were impressive by their almost entirely peaceful conduct. The advocates of violent resistance proved a small minority, and they were isolated almost everywhere. Keeping violence to a minimum was facilitated by advance contacts between the responsible leaders of the movement and the police. Beyond the normal kind of legal demonstrations, the movement engaged at a number of key points in tactics of "civil disobedience," such as blockading access to barracks and selected missile sites, until the police carried them away. While such tactics were regarded as violating the law, because they infringed the freedom of access of German or American soldiers, the police, too, avoided violence and took note of the identity of particularly insistent "blockaders" only in a limited number of cases. In general, there was an almost cheerful atmosphere of mutual tolerance: the police regarded the demonstrators not as a "fifth column" of the Soviets, as a government minister inclined to particularly offensive language had described the movement, but as an assembly of decent but deeply worried people—and the demonstrators did not regard the police as "the pigs," as the advocates of violence described them, but as ordinary fellow citizens doing their duty.

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It is worth stating that the demonstrations of the "peace movement" were, at their peak, much larger than the demonstrations of the student revolt and the "extra-parliamentary opposition" of the late sixties, but that they were much less violent. The reason is that they were overwhelmingly inspired by a totally different ideological mixture of pacifist, religious, social-democratic, and ecological motivations instead of the would-be revolutionary Marxism of that earlier movement. The heroes and models of the student revolt had been Ho Chi Minh and "Che" Guevara; the model of the "civil disobedience" of the peace movement was Martin Luther King.

This is not to deny that the small German Communist Party played a disproportionate role in supplying the movement with anti-American arguments and at times influencing its tactics. But it was the influence of a well-trained minority that usually was wise enough not to show its face. By contrast, the open advocates of violence, the para-terrorists, could at worst attack the police only at the fringe of the large demonstrations. They not only had no influence, but were often deliberately encircled by the peaceful demonstrators so as to prevent them from carrying out their plans.

Apart from those fringe phenomena, the countless local and regional groups composing the loosely organized peace movement consisted of three main elements. The smallest and most radical were the followers of the "Green" party—an originally ecological movement that has been trying to outflank the Social Democrats on the Left without adopting Communist doctrines or Communist centralistic discipline. They are today the only political organization officially advocating "neutralism." The second main element consists of a large part of the youth of the Christian Churches, led by a minority of clergymen committed to radical pacifism. The third main element are Social Democratic activists of the left wing, who, as the day of stationing approached, as the peace movement got stronger and the conduct of the negotiations appeared less and less promising, succeeded in virtually taking over their party with the support of its chairman, Willy Brandt. I deliberately chose words suggesting that the radicalized faction forced the turnabout of the party under whose government the double-track decision had been taken. For while Brandt's recent statements that he had always doubted the wisdom of that decision are perfectly credible, it was the tide from below that caused him to follow those doubts—in the interest not only of peace in Europe, but of peace in his party.

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VI.

In trying to risk a guess at the future impact of the peace movement on the evolution of West German policy, we must bear in mind the composition of that loosely organized movement from elements that have been mobilized on this single issue on one side, and from more firmly and permanently organized elements on the other. Now that the day of stationing is past and nothing catastrophic has happened, we may expect much of the otherwise unorganized following of the peace movement to dissipate—unless a major dramatic crisis in Europe revives the sense of fear that generated it. If the international situation remains more approximately normal, at least where Europe is concerned, the "follow-up" will depend on the more organized groups. Of those, the Communists will, in the absence of access to a large, temporarily mobilized but basically non-political crowd, be reduced to their normal isolation.

The "Green" party in turn seems to have passed its peak for internal reasons not connected with the peace issue. In the years since it entered a number of German state parliaments and finally the federal parliament, it has not succeeded in deciding whether it wants to be a parliamentary party, which implies readiness to conclude alliances and make compromises with other parties, or to remain governed by an uncompromising extra-parliamentary faction. In one state after another its best-known spokesmen are either removed from office by the "fundamentalists" or retire in disgust. The Social Democrats have accelerated this process by offering in some cases substantial compromises on the ecological issues which originally motivated the "Greens," while remaining firm on the principles of parliamentary government. For a time, the "Greens" may have profited from their role as a radical element in the peace movement; but the more the movement recedes from the front pages, the more they have to stand on their own legs—which are shaky. No doubt they will make an effort to keep the issue alive by a campaign for "neutralism"—but the potential response in the Federal Republic remains weak.

For judging the future effect of the "peace issue" in West Germany, then, the crucial question appears to be the future policy and role of the Social Democratic party—now the principal opposition party, and still the largest organized party in the country. A number of commentators have written as if, by voting against the stationing

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of the missiles and thus disavowing its former policy under Chancellor Schmidt, the Social Democrats had departed from serious and responsible policy for the foreseeable future, and even from the basic consensus of the democratic parties. To me, this seems a rash and superficial judgement.

The Social Democrats are not a single issue party. They are basically concerned with the economic and social life of their country. And after having been excessively diverted from those issues by the missile crisis, they are beginning to return to their proper role with a marked sense of relief—a relief shared by the rank and file. A considerable part of the "radical" faction voted against stationing not just from a wish to get rid of the missiles, but to get rid of a divisive issue. In recent state elections dealing with bread and butter rather than world affairs, the Social Democrats have done rather well in Hesse and Bremen. A regular party congress in May will above all discuss an economic emergency program to deal with mass unemployment. And while this is unlikely to lead quickly to a comeback on a national scale, it will certainly keep the party focus on its main concerns. In addition, the party leaders are fully aware of the vital importance of maintaining the basic democratic consensus. Hans-Jochen Vogel, the leader of the opposition in the Bundestag, while doing his job of criticizing the government, has gone out of his way to support its efforts to maintain reasonably normal relations with East Germany despite the missile issue; he has also announced that the Social Democrats will support the Christian Democratic candidate for the presidency of the republic, the present Berlin mayor Richard von Weizsäcker, because of his firmness in maintaining continuity in the intra-German aspect of Ostpolitik.

But most important, the Social Democratic Party leadership is seeking not to keep the missile issue alive after the decision for stationing, but to bury it while hoping and working for a resumption of negotiations. It has firmly rejected all appeals for "resistance" against the parliamentary decision in which it was outvoted, stressing that this is now binding in law. It has sharply condemned the appeal by a group of writers, including Social Democratic writers, for a refusal of military service, based on the absurd argument that the stationing of missiles was incompatible with the constitutional limitation of the Bundeswehr to defensive tasks. Moreover, the decision to put the brake on pacifism running amok had come *before* the stationing: when Willy Brandt spoke at the peace movement's mass meeting in

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Bonn, he told them that he was against the missiles, but for the NATO alliance and for the Bundeswehr. And both commitments were repeated in the same party congress resolution of last November which rejected stationing, with an explicit reminder that the alliance was necessary because of the basic conflict between Western democracy and the Soviet system.

All this does not mean, of course, that the Social Democrats are making a second turnabout and backing the policies they have criticized in rejecting stationing. It does mean, however, that they wish to get away from a purely negative pacifism; that they have overwhelmingly decided to reject neutralism; and that they wish instead to prepare constructive initiatives for making Western, and German, security less dependent on an increasingly doubtful nuclear deterrence. The various American initiatives in that direction, from the proposals for abandoning "first use," now under an agreement with the Soviets, to the suggestions of General Rogers for strengthening and modernizing conventional defense in Europe, so as to make the abandoning of "first use" eventually feasible, have been carefully studied by the Social Democratic defense experts—precisely with a view to preparing a future Western defense less dependent on nuclear weapons, without any disloyalty to the common cause. If such ideas should gain sufficient ground in Western Europe, including Western Germany, to make the conventional defense politically and financially possible, they might eventually also make possible a greater role of Europe in its own defense—and a correspondingly greater influence in the alliance. And that, I believe, is the only way to avoid future crises in the alliance, such as the recent "missile crisis."

Diana Pinto

II. LETTER FROM PARIS: ON RAYMOND ARON

Raymond Aron died at the apogee of a public success which he received late in life. His memoirs, an often complex and academic eight-hundred page volume, which detail at length his

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thought, political choices, and philosophical outlook, became an unlikely best-seller and dominated all intellectual debate during last autumn's Parisian *rentrée.*

Much has been written on the causes of Aron's late triumph. Some saw his success as proof that his thought finally "won" over that of his youthful friend and ideological rival, Jean-Paul Sartre. Others saw in Aron's current popularity a sign of the times. The collapse of a strong and confident left-wing intellectual milieu left the road open for the solitary voice from the liberal right, whose words of reason soothed after much revolutionary nonsense. In both cases, Aron's image of political-philosophical liberalism was best conveyed in his editorials in *Le Figaro* and later in *L'Express* rather than in his numerous books on philosophy, sociology, and international relations. It was less his opus than his philosophical stance of triumphant reason, combined with his superb pamphleteering skills, which was being acclaimed. If he was a *maitre à penser,* Aron founded no school of thought; his was not a creative but a critical outlook with which he commented on all aspects of French economic, political, and intellectual life.

Aron based his philosophical and political writings on the belief that one had to criticize the realm of politics from the "inside" and not in absolute moral terms. Political criticism had to take into account what decision-makers could actually do in a given set of circumstances. For him, absolute judgements of good and evil à la Sartre were of no use. Aron pleaded for a division of intellectual labor, and while he covered more than his share of fields (sociology, philosophy, economics, and international relations), he always opposed the global thinking of radical and Marxist philosophers who sought to judge human development in terms of philosophical "wholes," and in the name of lay religions, the most dangerous of which was, of course, communism.

Aron was the master of "l'intelligence raisonneuse," but his supremely rational bent was also his weakness. Human life and history are often shaped by irrational forces and motives; individuals do make a difference and their passions do precipitate decisions. The "spectateur engagé" Aron prided himself in being lacked a living sense of history, perhaps because he was guided from the onset by his fascination with the philosophy of history, most notably in its German incarnation. Although he was more than acquainted with tragedy in personal as well as in national terms, he sought to transcend its impact with the antidote of rational, some said cold, analy-

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sis. He commented on his country's political and intellectual debates with a lofty rationality which could never be pinpointed simply to any one camp or faction.

His memoirs show us how in the prewar period he was among the rare members of the French intellectual milieu who understood economics and its imperatives and who could criticize both France's deflationary politics and the subsequent economic recklessness of the Popular Front. He could fathom the blindness of French elites vis à vis Nazi Germany, their refusal to rearm, and their incomprehension of international affairs. In 1940, Aron left for England where he joined de Gaulle's Free French, but on the margins and never as a Gaullist diehard. Contrary to the London Resistants, he argued on behalf of contacts with members of the Vichy government and regretted deeply that in 1942 a French government in exile was not created in North Africa, around which all the French could rally. Aron the philosopher and de Gaulle the consummate man of action in history were never on the same wavelength. It is significant that Aron would become a Gaullist not during the years spent in London nor during the Fifth Republic, but during the General's years in the "wilderness" from 1947 to 1958. Aron was never a Mendèsiste; he praised the Fourth Republic for its economic achievements and for its opening to Germany, precisely two of its most disputed aspects to its contemporaries. Above all, Aron argued loud and clear that the French would have to leave Algeria sooner or later and that they should do it in the least damaging manner to their own interests. At the time of Aron's stand, France's political class, whether on the Left or on the Right, was solidly "Algérie Française." It is characteristic of Aron that he did not argue on behalf of Algerian independence on moral or revolutionary grounds like the French intelligentsia, but on the ground that an independent Algeria was an inevitable historical outcome in keeping with the international phase of decolonization.

Aron commented critically on de Gaulle's presidency and above all on his "grand dessein" in foreign policy while approving (though often for reasons that were different from the General's) the *force de frappe,* England's exclusion from the Common Market, and France's withdrawal from the military wing of NATO. What he condemned most was de Gaulle's equating of the two superpowers as a way of carving a special role for France in international affairs. For Aron, de Gaulle knew the difference between a democracy and a dictatorship, but he chose to minimize it in international relations, thus

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throwing the door wide open for a renewal of French anti-Americanism. Aron also condemned de Gaulle for his *"Vive le Quebec libre!"* speech and for his anti-Israeli position after the Six Day War.

In domestic terms, Aron, France's leading analyst of industrial society, never espoused the heady optimism of French planners who predicted in the early 1960s an indefinite period of unremittent growth, while speculating on "*l'horizon* 1985" without the least thought of Orwell's *1984*. He criticized the French university system when no one much cared, while supporting it during the explosion of 1968. Aron must certainly have enjoyed going countercurrent, but such a solitary stance was almost built into a way of reasoning which refused all passions and gave primacy to critical reflection.

Aron chose to address this critical reading of contemporary affairs to the elite in power hoping to influence it directly. In doing so he consciously opposed himself to French intellectuals who took impassioned stands without much caring whether they were ever heard in the circles of power. His definition of *Le Monde* is most illuminating in this context: *"La bible d'une intelligentsia de gauche qui s'accomodait d'une attitude critique sans impact direct sur les evenements."*

It is not at all clear to what extent Aron influenced those in power. The one French leader to whom he was intellectually closest, Giscard d'Estaing, never consulted him, beyond the level of courtesy, and took international stands (vis à vis the Soviet Union) which showed that he had not learned a single one of Aron's lessons. Despite his intentions, Aron remained a critical intellectual well removed from the very real power Henry Kissinger exerted, whose strength he envied and would have liked to have had, had he been an American. It was probably symptomatic of Aron's supreme ability to see everything in its true perspective, that he could be seemingly content to be a "simple" critic in a country whose international room for maneuver was so severely limited.

Beyond the public career as *editorialiste* known to all in France, and his writings known to a far more restricted audience, what stands out in reading Aron's memoirs is the powerful mold of French culture. Aron may have been on the intellectual fringes (albeit at the very heart of French honors and standing), yet in his relationship to his Jewishness, in his approach to America, and in his vision of France, he was as quintessentially "French" as his sometime nemesis, de Gaulle.

Aron never denied his Jewish origins, but he tended to see in

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them a perfectly neutral attribute, something that merited neither praise nor condemnation. He was above all French and strongly felt that there was no room for any dual allegiance. Between France and Israel one had to choose, and for him there never was any hesitation. Having come of age in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair, Aron always chose to see it not as the symbol of French anti-Semitism and the central episode in France's subterranean fascist heritage (a thesis Bernard Henri Lévy would develop in his *Ideologie Française*), but indeed as proof that French society was steeped in Republican virtues. There was an "Affaire" after all, rather than complacent silence. Aron commented on Nazi Germany as a Frenchman and wrote less than he might have wished on the topic, precisely because he did not want his critiques of the regime to be construed as the product of his Jewishness. Such self-censorship lay at the heart of many a French Jew's relation to the French State.

Aron tried to believe for a long period that Vichy France's treatment of the Jews was the direct result of German pressures. The gradual discovery of Vichy's eagerness to anticipate German wishes and to do one better profoundly wounded him. Yet Aron could never share the younger generation's militant Jewishness which came to the fore in the 1970s and their delving, almost with delectation, into France's murky past in search of anti-Semitic demons. Aron's tirade against de Gaulle for his reference to the Jews as "a peuple dominateur" stemmed more from his vision of what a head of state should and should not say, and a quasi-academic analysis of the weight of words in provoking anti-Semitism, than from any major reconsideration of the French past. For Aron, France's democratic identity was a given; he chose to skip over the wounds of the past thanks to the cold rationality of his ultimately eschatological view of history. Any notion of ethnic identity, of a Jewish lobby, or of a particularistic cause clashed with what was Aron's fundamental *seure de l'Etat* and even Jacobinism. It was thus more than symbolic that his last act before dying was to testify on behalf of a French thinker, Bertrand de Jouvenel, who had flirted with pro-German sentiments and corporatism in the 1930s, in a libel suit against an Israeli historian bent on showing Jouvenel's fascist and anti-Semitic outlook as proof of the impurity of French culture.

Aron's relationship to the United States was always complex. Dubbed as the lackey of American imperialism by the Left Bank intellectuals at the height of the cold war, criticized by the Gaullists for

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his Atlanticism, condemned by a portion of the Right (which comprised his *Le Figaro* readership) for his modernism and resolute democratic and egalitarian spirit, Aron always saw the United States as the positive pole in international affairs. But in an almost Hegelian manner, the country on whose shoulders the free world rested appeared to him to lack the consciousness of its responsibilities:

> J'ai toujours redouté moins l' excès de puissance des Etats-Unis que l' instabilité d'un pays—continent, projeté par les hasards des guerres dans la politique planétaire, et dont les gouvernants, la plupart peu conscients du dessin historique de la République, sont ballottés par les courants changeants de l'opinion publique.

Aron was, by his philosophical training, first turned toward Germany. France's defeat in 1940 led him to Great Britain and to a greater acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon culture. The United States was a postwar revelation. Aron would never (like most members of his generation) fully seize America's culture. He saw postwar America, imperial America, as the heir of the British empire, as one more incarnation of mankind's move toward modernity, but one whose apogee would inexorably end. Henry Kissinger, for Aron, was the actor whose vibrant and all-powerful international diplomacy in effect hid the very real decline of American world hegemony.

This decline, common to the entire West, of the "capacité d'action collective" was characterized for Aron by:

> la puissance excessive des lobbies, des groupes de pression, des syndicats; affaiblissement des idées ou préjugés qui cimentent les collectivités de l'éthique du travail qui passait pour l'âme de la réussite américaine; excès du légalisme qui se dégrade en démesure procédurière; préférence des universités et des savants pour les recherches fondamentales, relatif désintérêt de la conversion des découvertes en atout commercial.

Aron's view of Washington betrayed his intense dislike for lobby democracy and for politics as a daily activity as opposed to a Weberian "vocation":

> . . . cette ville étrange absorbée de manière quasi obsessionelle par la politique, qui bourdonne à chaque instant de rumeurs, dans laquelle des dizaines de milliers de personnes depuis le président jusqu'au plus simple journaliste—après tout Nixon a

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> été renversé par deux jeunes reporters—fouinent, intriguent, papotent, curieux du destin des sénateurs ou des rois lointains . . .

Nor was Aron viscerally attracted to the American press, whose sense of duty and tradition of telling all the truth he deplored at least with respect to Pompidou's disease. Aron referred to the "articles impitoyables" in the American press which showed the ravages of Pompidou's disease, whereas he felt that "la presse française se montra d'une décence exemplaire." Such a reaction showed to what an extent Aron failed to understand the very mechanism of American public democracy and the right to know. Aron was out of touch with American society's internal values, and probably shared George Kennan's increasing distaste for populist America. For him America remained the cold philosophical incarnation of democracy and world power, the central element of his analytical exercises, the bastion of liberty, but not a vibrant, contradictory reality. In this as in so many other aspects, Aron remained quintessentially "French": his Atlanticism was as French as de Gaulle's nationalism.

In effect, what prevented Aron from espousing a European "third way" equidistant from the United States and the Soviet Union, an idea which underpinned de Gaulle's "grand dessein," was his pessimism vis à vis any specific sense of a European mission, and his awareness that attempts to consider the Soviet Union as nothing more than a new incarnation of Russia derived from wishful thinking or empty optimism. There could be no Europe from "the Atlantic to the Urals" as long as the Soviet Union existed as such; only changes in its internal government could make such a European project viable, but such changes would amount to the Soviet Union's ideological destruction. For Aron, Europe could exist only thanks to the American presence; otherwise it would be submerged in the Soviet empire, given its unwillingness to assume its own defense.

De Gaulle's international gamble was thus for Aron highly dangerous. It could be in part explained in the 1960s by the fact that at the time America was the only superpower with a far-reaching global capacity for action. France could presume in such a context to strike out on its own as a counterbalancing force. In the 1970s any Gaullist third way would be dangerous, given the Soviet Union's rise to world power. Europe could no longer afford to be anti-Atlanticist. In this context it was highly symbolic of Aron's intellectual rigor that

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he would disapprove of the international stands of his political ally, Giscard, while approving of his political foe, Mitterrand, in his strong stand vis à vis the Euromissile issue.

America was thus vital to Aron's world view. Yet characteristically his analysis of the United States was ultimately detached. Vietnam had been a colossal blunder, detente an immense *contresens:* the magic equilibrium act between conflict and coexistence could be carried out only at Europe's expense. America's choices and constant hesitations were not up to par with her international role. The giant had feet of clay.

What about France? Aron spent a good portion of his life commenting on French domestic affairs, in an increasingly conservative tone. He played an instrumental role in *L'Express*'s shift to the center right from what had been earlier modernist-centrist positions. His increasingly militant stands after 1977 might have been his most influential political writings, but they were his less impressive intellectual output. Aron himself would sense this, as he prided himself for his major scholarly opus, *Clausewitz*. Behind Aron's day to day appraisals of French events, lay a great nationalist pride and a difficulty in accepting France's loss of prestige, begun in the prewar years, and accentuated during the Fourth Republic with its "regime de partis" which Aron condemned for the same reasons he disliked lobby democracy. More than anyone else, Aron was deeply aware of France's second rank status, her very real economic and social limitations, the gap between her reality and her pretensions of grandeur. He distrusted charismatic leaders, and this may explain his distance from Mendès and de Gaulle, yet he tenaciously argued for a political leadership with a clear sense of mission. He strove to point French elites in the direction of rational choices that would maximize France's international standing and opportunities, out of a high sense of his country's potential power.

Beyond France, Aron was a strong apologist for Western values, not out of any chauvinism, but from a characteristically reasoned stance:

> L'occidental l'emporte sur le fidèle de Lénine ou de l'imam Khomeny parce qu'il sait la différence entre les vérités scientifiques, si provisoires soient-elles, et les croyances religieuses, parce qu'il se conteste lui-même, conscient que notre culture est, à certains égards, une d'entre autres.

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Ultimately Aron's cold analytical glance was the best translation of a philosophy of limits predicated on a historical sadness and on the feeling that man's worst instincts were constantly just beneath the surface. He viewed human affairs with detachment and perfect rigor. No social, economic, or international contradiction ever escaped him. The result was a watertight opus whose inability to transcend contemporary reality doomed it to a static relevance.

Aron may have often been right when others were wrong, but in his clarity he conveyed more than anyone else the limits of French and even European maneuver.

David Twersky

III. LETTER FROM ISRAEL: AFTER LEBANON

Looking at a map of Israel, any map, I see how the lines have changed over the years, like the face of a middle-aged man you haven't seen since adolescence. There are no markings to indicate that there was once an international border between what is now called "Judea" and "Samaria" and the State of Israel. It is a frightening and unnerving war, and the collective public projection of power is a stronger force than an "international boundary." The war the Arab states forced on Israel in 1967, the famous Six Day War, recedes into history. Like any decisive war, it created new conditions which helped shape the issues for many years to come. Few Israelis now relate to the West Bank as the sovereign territory of another nation-state. As the Israeli occupation gradually lengthened, so that it is now almost as long as the previous 1948–1967 stage, attitudes hardened. The guiding doctrine of the Israeli government today, that Judea and Samaria will remain forever a part of the land of Israel, was in 1968 the exclusive point of view of a growing but still very marginal fringe on the extreme right and within the Yeshivot of a wing of orthodox Zionists.

Israeli culture has been taken over, as it were, the elusive center captured by the margin. In order to perpetuate this altered state of national awareness and perception which serves as the ideol-

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ogy (In Karl Mannheim's sense) of the Likud, history is being mobilized and rewritten, especially the history leading up to and including the war of independence. Begin was the commander of the Irgun, the major right wing armed underground in the forties; Itshack Shamir was the commander of the Lehi, the even more extreme underground. Their rehabilitation requires the opening up of the debates of that period, and their retroactively awarding themselves their "proper" place in the national myth of achieving independence.

The hardening of attitudes in Israel is due in large part to the collective Arab inability to offer Israel a peace. This stark fact and the invisible barriers of hostility which surrounded Israel on all sides helped legitimize the Likud and ease its way into power. In countless arguments with Israeli hawks and annexationists, doves are asked, "Yes, but who besides you is talking about peace? We are left, as it were, holding the bag."

We know that there have been changes in Arab thinking as well since the 1967 war, but they do not appear to progress in a straight line. For every murmur by Jordan's Hussein and every hint by the PLO's Arafat, there is the unambiguous hostility of Syria's Assad and (his) PLO men like Abu Musa. In this respect, the recent diplomatic moves by Egyptian President Mubarak are double-edged. On the one hand, Egyptian involvement may help Arafat bridge his differences with Hussein and cosponsor a peace initiative on the basis of 242 or the Reagan plan: that is, with a clear statement regarding Israel's right to exist. On the other hand, Mubarak's reported statements to the effect that "Camp David is dead," his refusal to return the Egyptian Ambassador to Tel Aviv, are pounced upon by the Israeli right. Those who always opposed Camp David, a group including the three leading members of the current government—Prime Minister Shamir, Defense Minister Arens, and Finance Minister Cohen-Orgad did not vote for it in the Knessett—see the drift as evidence of Egyptian duplicity: as soon as they got the Sinai back, their enthusiasm for peace waned. There were those like Begin, who saw Camp David as a way to resolve an "external" conflict by compromise precisely in order to create the conditions for an adamant refusal to yield on the "internal" conflict, namely to trade Sinai for a free hand on the West Bank. They now have transformed the term "Camp David process" into an excuse to do nothing, and a synonym for a *permanent* autonomy.

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Begin managed to resolve for his Herut central committee the conflict between their demand for Jewish sovereignty in Judea and Samaria and the new process he had initiated with Carter and Sadat. But the West Bank Palestinians, the PLO, and Jordan killed the process, insisting that the accords provide only for a perpetual autonomy, thus agreeing with Likud's definition. Today the "cold" peace with Egypt is used by all sides in Israel as "proof" for their positions: for hawks, that the Arabs cannot be trusted to live in peace with us and that the reason for their apparent moderation is to whittle Israel down to its vulnerable 1967 lines. Doves see it as evidence of their fundamental premise: that the territory can be traded for peace. (It *has* worked rather better than Sharon's "invade Lebanon and impose a peace" scenario.)

Of course, if something is new on the Arab side it is the public articulations, however hesitant, about peace with Israel. The Arab Fez plan, like the Soviet Brezhnev plan, does not acknowledge Israel's right to exist strongly enough, treating it as if it were a marginal issue. But paradoxically, this underlines its centrality. For Israelis as for the Arabs, it is *the* issue. Still, those statements represent a welcome change, and an Israeli policy which was not blinded by a fixation on annexation would carefully explore it.

As Fouahd Ajami has demonstrated, the change in Arab thinking should be challenged by an Israeli policy to articulate its inner assumptions more clearly. But the Likud prefers the status quo. On the eve of his departure for talks with President Reagan in December 1983, Prime Minister Shamir announced that he welcomed the possibility of talks with Jordan. Shamir was sending a message to George Schulz, who favored including Jordan in the peace process; with Jordan we already enjoy tourism, trade, and a terror-free border, as the Israeli Prime Minister pointed out. In other words, Israel already enjoys the best of both worlds, a de facto peace with Jordan *and* a de facto annexation of the West Bank.

Israeli doves also are deeply divided, both on the West Bank and on Lebanon. To the debate in which the doves have been arguing against annexation—perhaps the most fully articulate political discourse in contemporary culture—one must now add the debate among moderates and doves about the implications of the sixteen and a half years of Israeli occupation on Arabs and Jews. The optimists say "Even if we are still capable of making a deal over the West Bank one day, what are we going to do while we wait for the

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Arabs to get *their* act together and evince a readiness for peace?" The pessimists say, "For all intents and purposes, Israel has completed the de facto annexation of the West Bank." Some doves and moderates cling to the traditional position that the ultimate status of the West Bank has not been determined yet, that the "massive" Jewish settlement campaign, however unadvisable and even damaging, has not foreclosed the question. Furthermore, they claim, while certain limited moves can be made, unilaterally, to render the situation more acceptable, no steps should be taken which may reinforce the "megaforce" undercurrent pulling towards annexation. They oppose increased parliamentary control over the West Bank, arguing that the Arabs prefer the transient nature of a military government which rules without their consent to the nearly permanent nature of civilian parliamentary control which also rules without their consent. The only answer is that the focus of the national debate must shift from questions of ultimate sovereignty and Israeli borders, which unfortunately have been already answered, to that of the human rights of Arabs in the territories.

The most eloquent support for the de facto annexation thesis belongs to Meron Benvenisti who has conducted a series of studies on the exact nature and the cumulative effects of Israeli policies in the West Bank. Benvenisti argues that the forces working to attach the area to Israel permanently are far stronger than those counseling some form of territory-for-peace swap. He is somewhat more ambiguous about his conclusions in Hebrew (see for example his article last June in the weekly *Koteret Rashit*) than he is in English (as in the version of his *Koteret Rashit* article in *The New York Review of Books* in October 1983). Yet he is no less influential here among liberal-left activists and intellectuals, possibly because of a predilection to despair, in the face of six and a half years of Likud rule and the massive settlement campaign it continues to sponsor.

In part, Benvenisti attempts to shock domestic Israeli attention into an awareness of just how far down the road towards a grossly unequal dual society Israel has travelled. In part, it is an attempt to persuade the Arabs, as well as the foreign policy elites in the West, that time is not on the side of a peaceful compromise as envisioned in resolution 242: a swap of territory for peace and recognition. This strategy has triggered many unexpected and not always welcome reactions. Many Israeli doves accept the overstatement as the full truth. (Curiously, the annexationists of Herut, Gush Emunim, and

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Tehiya are less sure that their effort to "secure Judea and Samaria" and to "close options" has been successful.) In the absence of an Arab testing of Israeli intentions, columnists like William Safire of the *New York Times* were able to defend the settlements as precisely the pressure necessary to convince the Arabs they had better bargain in earnest. His colleague, Anthony Lewis, decried the settlements, but similarly accepted the Benvenisti conclusion that Israel is but "five minutes to (the) midnight" of de facto annexation, in order to persuade the Arabs to enter peace talks with Israel. But the pace of change Benvenisti reports has undoubtedly put pressure on moderates in the West Bank and Jordan to move progress towards a solution.

No one can argue that the increased pace and the more diverse location of settlements under the Likud has not dramatically changed the situation. But there is little agreement on how to understand the change. A senior State Department official, in an unreported conversation while flying in a helicopter over the West Bank, snapped at a junior colleague for a remark critical of the settlements below them, "Think about U.S. history and remember 'manifest destiny'." Some friends obviously support the process and privately advise Israeli leaders to "tough it out."

Most Israeli journalists covering the West Bank agree with Benvenisti that the changes introduced are massive and that they will be exceedingly difficult to reverse. David Richardson, of the *Jerusalem Post,* when reviewing Benvenisti's research, concluded that, "if one examines (his) findings with a mind to withdrawal, it becomes clear that, at least in terms of the populations involved, much of the West Bank *can be given up.*"

Israel has become a society which rules over a large disenfranchised minority—with a different set of national, religious, historical, cultural, and political symbols and aspirations. Above all, they reject the perpetuation of what is to them an alien hegemony, and want to participate in an Arab political experience of one sort or another. The fact that no Arab country is a democracy misses the point: for the Arabs the key issue is the right to link up to an Arab (Jordanian-Palestinian) fate; for the Jews, the question addresses the very core of Israel's political identity. "What characterizes the *Israeli* situation today?" is a question challenging the fundamental concerns of all Israeli democrats. As Rubenstein has argued, the Arab states abandoned the Palestinian question, while Israel inter-

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nalized it. The situation is increasingly depressing because, compared to the unfortunate (if unavoidable) occupation, the new occupation-with-intent-to-annex is worse. As Abba Eban has written, "the State of Israel is a democracy, the Land of Israel is not." Thus we live in a confused set of overlapping maps. And the land of Israel, in some ways, is more real than the State of Israel, because it embraces the current political experience.

One by-product of these developments is the increasing knowledge about the West Bank among Israelis. Deeply stung by the Syrian-launched attack on Arafat's Fatah, which ended in Arafat's second forced departure from Lebanon in two years, West Bank Arabs have begun to speak openly in favor of a rapprochement with Jordan and an unequivocable peace initiative toward Israel. When a bomb went off on a West Jerusalem bus on December 6, killing two young girls and an old man, Arafat's WAFA news agency claimed credit for the attack. But former mayors Khareem Halaf, Rashad a Shawa, Anwar Nusseiba, Mustafa Natashe, and the editors of the East Jerusalem (and pro PLO) Al fajr newspaper condemned the attack as "an obstacle to Israeli-Palestinian understanding." (Halaf is himself the victim of a car bomb which blew off one leg.) These activists speak of a "Labour Party" option and understand the nuances of Israeli society—less and less does one encounter the traditional Palestinian "rejectionist" argument that "all Zionists are the same" and that the Likud is merely the naked iron fist without Labour's deceptive velvet glove. What bothers some observers is the nagging doubt that Arafat might want to "pull a Sadat." They fear that he ultimately might maneuver towards a superpower enforced Israeli withdrawal from the territories—with the 1956 Israeli withdrawal from Sinai as the paradigm. However, if that were to be his ploy, Arafat should not be encouraged to think that he could have "peace on the cheap."

There are proposals for getting the West Bank situation off its present disastrous course (e.g. a unilaterally imposed autonomy, new elections for mayors, a freeze on Jewish settlements), but these probably require a change of government in Jerusalem. This possibility is no longer as remote as it once may have appeared, as the economic situation and Lebanon have led to the Likud's decline in popularity.

Although the post-Begin government is less confrontationalist in tone, its policy essentially is not different. In terms of Lebanon,

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Israel's "never-ending war," however, the Shamir/Arens team is markedly dissimilar from the Begin/Sharon team. Begin and Sharon planned and waited for the opportunity to launch a full-blown invasion of Lebanon, to save the Maronites from a "holocaust" and to push the Syrians back into Syria (as Begin promised during the 1981 election campaign). But Shamir and Arens have largely given up on these overarching goals, and have been narrowing Israel's aims to the original "peace for Galilee," that is, to guarantee the security of Israel's northern settlements. No one is now taking a position beyond that. Sharon himself, politically frustrated and tired of running on a treadmill, lashed out and denied any personal responsibility for the war! To which Labour Party dove Yossi Sarid retorted, "Soon the war will be an orphan; no one, not even Sharon, wants to claim credit for it." Arens claims that when he can guarantee the safety of Israel's northern settlements he will favor a withdrawal. In this respect, public opinion has grown increasingly unfriendly to the wider aims whose pursuit in Lebanon it used to favor. All the polls indicate that a substantial majority now opposes the extension of the war in June 1982 beyond the limited scenario of forty kilometers. As to what Israel now should do, a growing section of the public favors immediate withdrawal with an attempt to make the best deal we can —to keep the PLO away from Israel's border.

Against Arens, Aharon Yariv has argued that the longer we remain in Lebanon, the more entangled we become, that the Syrian presence in the Bekaa poses no direct security threat to Israel. Arens mostly fears a bad reaction in Washington, and this keeps him from publicly separating Israel's goals in Lebanon from the question of the Syrians. In fact, the United States involvement has been a mixed blessing for Israel, while Syrian obduracy created the illusion of interests common to Washington and Jerusalem. As Yariv noted, "We have a common enemy (Syria), but no common interest."

The Americans who, if Jordan and the Palestinians enter the peace process, would prefer a Labour government in Jerusalem, came to prefer a Likud government vis-à-vis Lebanon. But the only way to remove Syria from Lebanon is through an Israeli ground operation. And the not very subtle pressure on Israel not to withdraw unilaterally (see William Safire, on the Sunday before the Shamir-Reagan talks, last November 27) created some tension among those Israelis who are used to seeing themselves as close to the Americans. In fact, it was difficult for Labour and for Peace Now to adapt to the

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shifting alliances. Labour continued to argue unequivocably for dropping the demand that Syria withdraw simultaneously. But the moderate left and the peace movement in Israel are neither anti-American nor neutralist. Their differences with Washington concern the attempt to link United States goals to Israeli interests. (Whether or not the United States has a valid set of interests as perceived by the current administration in Washington is a domestic United States debate.) Israeli concerns are local and regional, rather than global. The nuclear issue, for example, is not a major concern. This does not indicate any parochialism of spirit but rather the overwhelming complexity and all-encompassing nature of the local conflicts.

As the question of how to get out of Lebanon became primary, Peace Now, which has been nominated for a Nobel Prize, began to avoid the issue, focusing more on the West Bank. This reflects the inability of their concensus-oriented leadership to agree on a strategy for withdrawal.

But Peace Now and the moderate Labour movement favor withdrawal; yet they also fear the return of the PLO to within striking range of Israeli settlements, and they would like to prevent that possibility. They are serious, however, about getting the IDF out of Lebanon and back into Israel. What happened is that a demand for a more "radical" approach, immediate unilateral withdrawal, found expression through other issues. One was the more radical Yesh Gvul, which advocates that reservists go to jail rather than serve when their units go to Lebanon. They also fear that the Likud government may be tempted to escape its political predicament by provoking a way to dislodge Syria from Lebanon. (Labour warns that the government's continued reference to the demand that Syria leave Lebanon threatens to entangle Israel in a new war, but not that the government might consciously provoke it.) Kibbutzim, however, which still command a diminished but powerful moral legitimacy which other groups on the moderate left lack, have been sending their members, one kibbutz at a time, to demonstrate outside the prime minister's office, during the weekly cabinet session.

Israeli intellectuals, Peace Now, and Labour activists are somewhat unique among their counterparts in the West in that they have from their own experience learned to take threats seriously. They always recognized the legitimate roles of security and defense, and they were never tempted to dismiss war as an unacceptable

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means. No one ever proposed "unilateral disarmament" or a "fortress Israel" isolationism: everyone recognizes that there are things worth fighting for. The debate about Lebanon is, therefore, very specific, and concerns the proper use of the IDF and the definition of legitimate Israeli interests. The opposition has agreed that it is unacceptable for Israel to keep the IDF in Lebanon (with the attendant loss of life). Israel, it believes, must use its considerable (and absolutely necessary) military force quickly and directly when it is necessary—and not use it when unnecessary. The declared goals in Lebanon, Abba Eban said in a knesset speech, "jeopardized the lives of soldiers beyond the realm of Israel's ability and responsibility, (thus) inviting tragedy." There also has been some fear that among the casualties of this war will be the national resolve to back the government about going to war in the future.

Though Israel still requires the generous support it has been receiving from the United States, talk of using aid as a lever to pressure Israel into softening its policies is counterproductive. But the peace process does require a visible level of United States support for Israel, as well as continued Israeli military superiority, and Arab states and the Palestinians must be convinced of the inadvisability of war, as well as of the virtues of peace. Hence, a serious cut in United States support could trigger maximalist Arab demands and threaten both Israel's military and economic infrastructures.

If there has been a marked increase among Israelis of illiberal and extremist sentiments towards Arabs (and, to a lesser extent, towards dissenting Jews), it is not because of something inherent in Zionism. Zionism also produced Peace Now, Yesh Gvul, the kibbutz movement, the Labour movement. If that achievement of a mix of modern liberal values with a specific Jewish commitment is now on the defensive, it is not only because of the renewed self-confidence of fundamentalist forces and of the nagging self-doubts which plague liberalism everywhere. It is also the result of decades of unbending Arab hostility and unwillingness to compromise. Everyone in the Middle East casts himself or herself as the inconsolable victim at the center of a vast historical tragedy, with no room or inclination to notice the multiple tragedies we daily inflict upon each other, perpetuating our myopic myths of national suffering and resurrection. Everyone has his own map. What we now need so desperately is not some transcendent vision of the future or an illusory debt to the past, but the courage to face the human, cultural, and national realities.

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN MODERN THOUGHT

THE TURN TO INTERPRETATION: AN INTRODUCTION

by Daniel Bell

Jean Piaget remarked many years ago, "It is not that children can't speak; they try many languages until they find one their parents can understand." Noam Chomsky might counter by saying this is not the way children learn—or, one might say, express—language; children have the capacity to understand rules, and once an underlying rule is grasped, children can then speak in tongues they did not even "know" they had. This is one division in a theory of mind. Hume made a distinction between matters of fact and matters of relation, the one empirical, the other logical. For William James, following this distinction, the world is double-storied in that we seek to impose a logical order on a factual disorder. But is there "one" logical order, or many different ones on that same "disorder?" And may not "logic" itself be a "fuzzy set" rather than a precisely defined set of inferences? From Leibniz to Carnap, philosophers thought of creating a "constructed" language, with its own notation and a clearly defined set of referents, in order to be precise about the relations between words and things. ("What can "Das Nichts selbst nichtet [the nothing itself nothings]" mean?" said Carnap contemptuously of Heidegger.) But constructed languages were found to be too constricting, and philosophers returned to "natural" language as the ongoing laboratory of human experience.

But in the return to language, does knowledge precede our experience, and shape or select what we see, as in the conceptual structures of Kant; or does knowledge follow from experience, so that truth or meaning has to be based on the correspondence of our words to the world "out there." In the contemporary effort to thread one's way through these ancient, clashing rocks, we see the effort to define speech acts as performances or, more broadly, a surprising return to pragmatism, yet more finely honed, in which words or propositions are seen as guides to action, and beliefs are revised in the light of experience. But if experience, again, is the touchstone of knowledge, is there any fixity in the world, or are there "many

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worlds," and, if so, how does one avoid the relativism (and its self-confuting paradoxes) which is inherent in knowledge derived from the variability and flux of experience, and from the different standpoints of the observers? These are the central questions raised by Hilary Putnam, who had been one of the leading figures in establishing a "realist" position in contemporary philosophy (based on a "correspondence theory" of truth) but who has now retreated to a modified neo-Kantian position of knowledge as "somewhat" mind-dependent. ("It is not that the thinking mind *makes up* the world . . . but it doesn't just mirror it either.")

These elementary statements (elementary in the double sense of being simple, yet of the first order) are intended to introduce the essays in this issue of *Partisan Review*. They do not seek to "frame" the issues but to suggest that the current sets of questions and upheavals in philosophy and social thought are not "simply" one more turn in intellectual fashion, but epitomize the new efforts of the disciplined imagination to find some ways of making consistent, meaningful, and persuasive statements about fundamental issues, when the established ways have been found wanting or have become exhausted.

What is clear is that the older certitudes in the different fields, and even the "quest for certainty," which has always marked man's search for some order to the "blooming, buzzing confusion" of the world, are giving way to some "new" (or in some instances a return to older) modes. In philosophy, the dominance of "analytical philosophy" (in its empiricist guise), with its reduction of meanings to atomistic terms and sentence structure, is eroding, and various forms of realism, or what Nelson Goodman has called "irrealism" (the oscillation between idealism and realism) or even "essentialism" (as with Kripke) have become new foci of interest. The philosophy of science, which once gave promise of certitude, by establishing logical canons of explanation (e.g. the work of Hempel and Nagel), or the criteria of falsification as an approach to truth, has come under attack from the argument that observations are not independent of theory, and if they are theory-laden, then observations cannot be the source of confirmation or disconfirmation, and that "incommensurable" observations (and even theories, in the most radical version) can coexist in different and even similar frames. So the imp of relativism appears again.

Moral discourse, which just a few years ago had been ruled out

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of science as "emotive" or "metaphysical noise," has returned to the center of disciplined philosophical inquiry. But in so doing, it has returned in some surprising guises. One is the reassertion of an "objective" moral order which can be established by rational inquiry, the other that such order can be established by "moral intuitions," such as the sense of justice, which are common to all men. And, interestingly, men such as John Rawls or Ronald Dworkin seek to establish both claims within a single frame.

The new moral discourse has given rise to fierce challenges to utilitarianism (with its implicit idea of the "measurement" or "optimality" of a greatest good, to be established by the felicific calculus). Utilitarianism, with its emphasis on individual preferences, has been one of the major underpinnings of neoclassical economics. The other has been the idea of an "equilibrium" in which, through the fulcrum of the market and the *tatonnement* (the phrase of Walras)—the equilibrating action of buyers and sellers—an optimal order could be (theoretically) established that would reflect an optimal balancing of satisfactions. And yet, that model of human action (reflecting the mirror of classical mechanics) has been set aside by such interesting thinkers as Amartya Sen, Albert Hirschman, and Thomas Schelling, who have been exploring the quixotic twists of economic behavior (what the individual desires for himself, in the aggregate turns out to be a nightmare), the social definitions of understanding, and the way values enter into our theorems of welfare economics.

One way—certainly not the only one—of charting these new directions is to look at the "turn to interpretation," which is gathering force in the social sciences. Interpretation is one of the oldest forms of human inquiry. In traditional religious thought, it goes under the name of exegesis. No statement stands alone, for there are always multiple meanings to myth, parable, or scripture. Rabbinic exegesis (taken over by the medieval schoolmen and Dante) identified four levels of meaning (under the acrostic mnemonic, yet double-storied veil) of *Pardes:* Peshat, Remez, Derash, and Sod—the literal, allegorical, homiletic, and mystery. Exoteric exegesis emphasized the literal and homiletic; esoteric exegesis, the allegorical and the mysterious.

In modern thought, interpretation returned under the rubric of hermeneutics, beginning with Schleiermacher, who turned it away from the philological and textual exegesis; was extended by Dilthey, who introduced the idea of *verstehen,* or understanding, as the basic

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mode of the cultural sciences; and revived today by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, where the philosophical concern is with the historicity of the human sciences.

In its broadest sense, the turn to interpretation is a move away from positivism, with its emphasis on "naive" observation (radical behaviorism in psychology; physicalism in philosophy), from the search for "laws" or "regularities" and even "causal relations" (not in the historical sense of antecedents, but the philosophical sense of "covering law" or general theories of the ordered relations between variables, such as a theory of the determinate, causal relation between substructure and superstructure).

In anthropology, the theme of interpretation is associated most directly with Clifford Geertz, in his emphasis on the "symbolic" level of discourse rather than social-structural relations, on what he has called (following Gilbert Ryle) "thick description" in order to understand the complexity and texture of a culture, and the emphasis on particularity or "local knowledge."

In sociology, the "interpretative turn" is featured in the work of Robert Bellah and his students, in their emphasis on the moral meanings of actions, as the focal points of inquiry into society. And it is a view that I share, in a concern with culture, in my theorem of the "disjunction of realms," and my criticism of the functionalist and "totality" theories which tend to look on society as a "system."

In law, and on reflection it should occasion little surprise, the turn to interpretation has taken the strongest hold, for law consists not only of texts but increasingly, given its activist role, of judicial interpretation and its strong consequences in the lives of individuals. Just as in literature, the problems of meaning, of "authorial intent" (should one be guided by the Founding Fathers, what did they mean, etc.) and even of the "deconstruction" of a text (if law is "only" what the judges say, what stability of meanings is there? What is the nature of an objective rule?) all lead, once again, to the problems of relativism.

The turn to interpretation, in the broadest cultural sense, signifies the turn of the social sciences—or of those practitioners of this art—from the models of the natural sciences and their modes of inquiry, to the humanities. But it is also part of a glacial shift, in that there are those who also argue that the natural sciences themselves have lost their "privileged" status as being the mode of inquiry for

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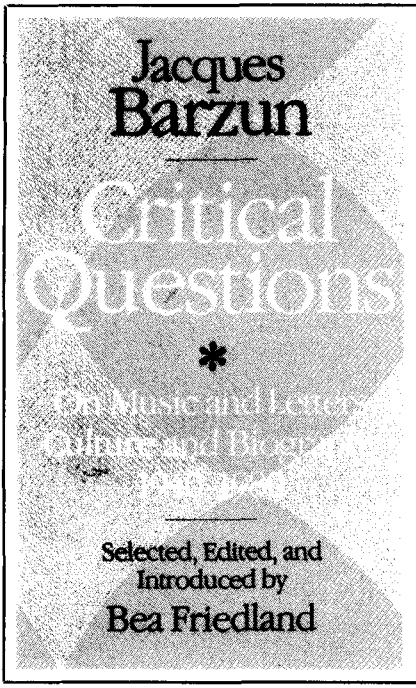
"objective" truth and are becoming more like all the other modes of human inquiry and subject to all its itching diseases.

This, then, is the rationale for this issue. It is not an effort to survey all the fields, or to become a manifesto for a new "truth." (In fact, one of the most interesting efforts to yoke science and art as a *common* mode of inquiry, the work of Nelson Goodman, rejects, in this context, the idea of "truth" and argues for an idea of "rightness" as a way of seeing, say, the theories of Kepler and the paintings of Mondrian through a common prism.) It is an effort to call attention to some interesting work being done in philosophy and social thought, an exercise in awareness.

I cannot say, let the articles "speak for themselves," for one of the canons of this mode of inquiry is to argue that few things if any, including facts, speak for themselves. The more appropriate way, perhaps, of concluding this introduction is to say, *on s'engage, puis on voit:* let the reader engage the text.



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Mark Lilla

ON GOODMAN, PUTNAM, AND RORTY: THE RETURN TO THE "GIVEN"

Yes, stick to words at any rate;
There never was a surer gate
into the temple, Certainty.
—Mephisto, *Faust*

The "quest for certainty," as Dewey called it, has been the central aim of philosophy since the Greeks. Yet it is only in the past century that language came to be seen as the gate through which entrance to the temple could be gained. Beginning in the Anglo-American tradition with the logical atomism of Russell and the early Wittgenstein—and, on the continent, with the rise in linguistic structuralism and the hermeneutics movement—the study of language became central to modern philosophy, not to mention the broader realms of modernism in literature, criticism, and anthropology.

In many ways Anglo-American philosophy has been a remarkable barometer of modernism. Through that linguistic gate analytic philosophers were, to their minds, only extending the tendencies in Western philosophy evident since Descartes; yet in another sense, they were also joining their cultural contemporaries who sought to enter the same temple through different gates. But gates lead in and gates lead out. And just as modernists in art, architecture, and literature have come to find the ark in the temple of Certainty empty, so too have many philosophers in the modern analytic tradition come to feel the quest mistaken. More striking still, each group, in its search for the yet-undefined "postmodern," has, like Mephisto, felt constrained to leave by the very door which it entered: "neoexpressionist" painters are reviving the styles of the early 1900s; postmodern architects are reintegrating ornamentation and decoration into their work; and through the study of language many analytic philosophers are finding themselves returning to the perennial questions which occupied philosophy before Russell and followers such as Ayer ruled them "meaningless."

Of course, there always has been a current within twentieth century analytic philosophy—and certainly outside it—that denied that logic and language were the certain foundations on which the eternal truth of scientific or moral statements would be established.

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Wittgenstein himself, in his later years, rejected the "correspondence" theory of language put forward in his *Tractatus*—the view that language can be related in direct connection to things in the world—arguing instead in the *Philosophical Investigations* that language can only express a "coherent" view of the world, the truth of which cannot be determined outside that language. Different arguments against "correspondence" theories in logic and language have been put forward by W. V. Quine and Donald Davidson as well. In the past several decades this question of "correspondence versus coherence" has been at the root of philosophic and historical disputes about science, with Thomas Kuhn and others chipping away at the "realist" picture of the foundations of the modern scientific enterprise.

This disjointed critical tendency has lately come to be called "antifoundationalism," to distinguish it from the "foundationalism" implicit in the Anglo-American absorption with technical questions of logic, language, and scientific method; "foundationalism" has become a widely, if vaguely, used pejoration meant to criticize the belief that such inquiry will eventually undergird timeless, invariant facts and judgments. The recent work of Nelson Goodman, Hilary Putnam, and Richard Rorty can be considered a culmination of this recent critical turn within twentieth century academic philosophy. Each has taken account of the antifoundationalist arguments which have been made separately with regard to language, science, logic, and epistemology, and each has distilled them into quite powerful critiques of the foundational program of modern analytic philosophy. The differences between Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty remain large: each has a different view of "what went wrong" with analytic philosophy, and they disagree sharply about the future of philosophy. But for the first time in decades the attention of professional philosophy is focussed on a common set of questions, the answers to which may determine the character of what, for lack of a better term, might be called "postmodern philosophy."

Academic philosophy, given its technical preoccupations with method, has been peripheral to American intellectual life for some time; apart from a now dormant interest in Deweyan pragmatism and a flirtation with European existentialism, intellectuals as a group have not "kept up" with contemporary American philosophy for decades. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that the work of Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty could change all that. For not only

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are they disabused of the notion that we can enter the temple of Certainty through language; they have come to redefine our very notion of certainty and in so doing have explicitly returned to the central questions of philosophy—the meaning of art, the objectivity of science, relativism and morals, the status of literary expression—*without reducing them to questions of method.* There are severe problems with the way they answer these questions, problems I would like to examine at length in this essay. But they are *interesting* problems; indeed, for the first time in decades certain academic philosophers are posing the right problems, and that makes their work worthy of attention.

I.

Ways of Worldmaking (1978) is by far the most accessible of Nelson Goodman's works written over thirty years of a distinguished career. Having made his mark in logic and the philosophy of language, he has turned to aesthetics, and his current reflections on "worldmaking" derive from his interest in the arts. Indeed, it might fairly be said that Goodman's extended critique of foundationalism has been an attempt to make sense of his own aesthetic response, and make room for that response within the mind of an analytic philosopher.

The question Goodman asks is something like this: can both Kepler and Kandinsky be right? Only analytic philosophers would take such a question seriously, because everyone else is satisfied that, since one was an astronomer and the other a painter, the question is meaningless. But analytic philosophers have usually taken the question of "rightness" very seriously—to be right means to be true, and for something to be true it must correspond to something real in the world. We think we know that Kepler referred to the planets we see, and we also think that the motion of those planets corresponds to his laws. But to what do Kandinsky's *Improvisations* refer, and how do we begin to check correspondence?

Goodman's answer is not that aesthetic concepts have nothing to do with trueness or rightness, but that our conception of truth as correspondence to the "real world" is mistaken. There is no single "true theory of the world"—especially not a logical, scientific one—but many different versions of the same world (or, as Goodman says, there may be different worlds). Kepler and Kandinsky

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each created coherent worlds that can be assessed only for their own "rightness" and either accepted or rejected, and if accepted they can exist side by side. Goodman exhorts us to create new, true worlds, rather than look for the single true one, because "truth, far from being a solemn and severe master, is a docile and obedient servant."

Goodman's theory of truth has been dubbed a not very novel version of "holism" by some, and has been charged with the usual deficiencies of holism: it recognizes no distinctions between the possible and the absurd, allowing anyone to create his own world and crawl into it; and in the name of value it bleeds the world of all value by making everything relative. In short, holism is mysticism. Goodman will admit that his is a "radical relativism under severe constraints," but he spends more time discussing the nature of the constraints than holism itself. Since "the world depends on rightness" we must pursue what seems true in our world; inevitably we will run into anomalies within our world, or our world will collide with another, and, "put crassly, what is called for in such cases is less like arguing than selling." Goodman's attitude toward philosophy is what Robert Nozick has called a "non-coercive" one. He wants philosophers to open up and critically explore as many versions of the world as they can; and the adverb "critically" is important here because "a willingness to welcome all worlds builds none." "Never mind mind, essence is not essential, and matter doesn't matter," he tells fellow philosophers—we have worlds to build.

However, the most important constraint in worldmaking is not on us—that it is up to *us* to be creative—but on the world itself. Though worlds are made, they are never made from scratch: "Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds we have on hand; the making is a remaking." As it turns out, much of the world we experience, and of the worlds we create, is not a logical *tabula rasa* but is historically given—not in the sense of "fixed," but in the sense of "prior." There is no worldmaking, or philosophy, *de novo:*

> We start, on any occasion, with some old version of the world we have on hand and that we are stuck with until we have the determination and skill to remake it into a new one . . . Worldmaking begins with one version and ends with another.

Having first criticized positivists for believing that it is possible to describe the one true version of the world, Goodman now deflates

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the individualistic relativist who would like to think that he has transcended convention, tradition, and history in his solipsistic imaginings.

Here I push Goodman's argument further perhaps than he does because it is precisely at this point that the book begins to disappoint. If a world must also be found before it can be made or remade, what are we to think of "worldfinding"? Does the priority of the world we find place some limitations on the act of worldmaking? How are we to treat the traditional scientific, moral, and artistic practices we inherit in the "old world we have on hand"? If we *can* transform them as much as we want, how much transformation *should* we want?

Ways of Worldmaking seems less cryptic and mystical on rereading. If at first it appears that Goodman's relativism gets the best of him, it later becomes clear that he does wish to defend claims to "rightness" within the worlds, and that he considers scientific conceptions of truth among the highest forms of rightness. As he wrote in the *Journal of Philosophy* in 1979: ". . . my argument that the arts must be taken no less seriously than the sciences is not that the arts 'enrich' us or contribute something warmer and more human, but that the sciences as distinguished from technology, and the arts as distinguished from fun, have as their common function the advancement of understanding." Goodman's antifoundationalism is anything but nihilistic; it is an invitation to create something from the world we have. Thus the reader's disappointment—in finding the "givenness" of the world unexplored—is exaggerated by the expectations he has raised. Why, one wonders, is this book's title not, *Ways of World Remaking?*

II.

If Nelson Goodman is now a holist reflecting on his turn from foundationalism, Hilary Putnam is an apostate foundationalist uncomfortable with his available alternatives. Best known for his work in the philosophy of science and mathematical theory, Putnam was, up until just a few years ago, what he would call a "metaphysical realist"—that is, someone who believed it is possible to construct "a model of the relation of any correct theory to all or part of THE WORLD." His views have altered substantially since, and this transformation has, in turn, redirected his interests toward the social

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sciences (which he insists must be called "social studies"), history, literature, and ethics. These views were expressed rather technically in *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (1978), and have been more fully developed and articulated for a less-professional audience in *Reason, Truth, and History* (1981).

Reason, Truth, and History opens with a discussion of a familiar "hypothetical" used in academic philosophy of language: if an ant crawling on a beach happens to form a path in a shape which looks, to us, remarkably like Winston Churchill, in what sense can it be said that this "picture" really "represents" or "refers to" Churchill? Putnam believes—rightly, I think—that the answer to this question can have an important connection to all the contemporary questions of meaning, intention, interpretation, and reference. His conclusion, quite different from what he believed ten years ago, is that neither the world nor our minds alone fix the meaning of words, but that it is out of the interaction of the two that meaning is created. Meaning is neither a "fact" out there waiting to be found, nor a "fiction" of our minds, of our society, or some ruling class. This view is, of course, not novel to Putnam; what makes it worth noting is how this "metaphysical realist" arrived at it, and his extension of it.

Putnam believes that the real consequences of rejecting a "correspondence theory of truth" is that we can say *many* true things about the world—we can have both Kepler and Kandinsky—and should never expect to be able to say the *one* true thing about the world. Putnam takes quite seriously the writing of those who want to push antifoundationalism to a far more radical, relativistic conclusion; it just turns out, however, that every one of such conclusions is, in the end, self-refuting. "Anarchism" in the philosophy of science—the view that scientific theories at different times in history and in different cultures are utterly "incommensurable" because they assume different worldviews—is a contradiction, because to "prove" incommensurability one must first be able to compare theories. And radical relativism is thoroughly inconsistent: when is the last time you heard someone say, "Relativism is true where I'm coming from," Putnam asks.

Putnam is especially good in discussing Foucault and other contemporary French thinkers, for he has correctly diagnosed that the reason their work on the social and historical roots of knowledge affects us so deeply is that these forces seem "irrational by our present lights." "The French thinkers are not *just* cultural relativists;

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they are attacking our present notion of rationality from within, and this is what the reader feels and is troubled by." We in the West seem caught in the web of rationality, for the only way we can criticize human reason is by claiming that it is "irrational."

Up to this point, Putnam's criticism of foundationalism seems to converge with Goodman's, and in fact he does admit his debt to the author of *Ways of Worldmaking* in the preface of this volume. Differences in temperament and attitude, however, eventually win out. Goodman, after dismissing foundationalism, goes on to defend what can be described only as an "aesthetics of knowledge," while Putnam seems intent on preserving a more rigid sense of scientific rationality as real knowledge. If we cannot hope to have a firmly grounded realism that explains everything for all time, Putnam at least wants to salvage "realism for us."

This "internal" realism can make no claims to absolute truth, but it can claim to be rational—again, by our present lights—and what is truth but "an idealization of rational acceptability"? Even if we have given up the search for truth with secure foundations, it is clear from the criticisms of antifoundationalists that we can still operate with some sense of what it means to be rational; and if rationality itself is not firmly grounded, it is still a value worth defending. The important question to answer is not "is it possible to be rational?"—we would not be asking if we thought not—but "why is it good to be rational?"

Putnam retraces the development of logical empiricism and logical positivism in this light, trying to understand how each movement believed rationality to be some "thing" which would eventually be "formalized," thus making philosophy scientific. In language and logic, twentieth-century philosophers thought they had found *the* rational foundation, and as that dogma has slowly lost its grip on the minds of those in academia, both foundationalism *and* rationality were rejected. Putnam wishes to make a more limited case for rationality as a value.

If rationality is not a free-floating enterprise, or merely a quality, then it must be part of something ongoing, something connected up with our sense of what is valuable. Rationality must be made "relevant," and that only happens within a certain shared way of life:

> Using any word . . . involves one in a history, a tradition, and of adapting it to new contexts, extending and criticizing it. One can interpret traditions variously, but one cannot apply a word at all

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> if one places oneself entirely outside of the tradition to which one belongs. And standing inside a tradition certainly affects what one counts as "rational acceptability."

This is both an explanation of how rationality operates in the world —it operates in and begins from an ongoing tradition of discourse— and an invitation to join in the criticism, preservation, and extension of the tradition that embodies that rationality.

> We can only hope to produce a more rational *conception* of rationality or a better conception of *morality* if we operate from within our tradition. . . ; but this is not at all to say that all is entirely reasonable and well with the conceptions we now have. We are not trapped in individual solipsistic hells, but invited to a truly human dialogue; one which combines individuality with collective responsibility.

The foregoing passages show Putnam at his very best: having abandoned the search for foundations, and having honestly confronted the confused positions of the radical relativists, he fully comprehends that the only alternative is to take one's "given" tradition, immerse oneself in it, and then modify and extend it from within. As with Goodman, Putnam does not develop this point any further, considering the consequences of what might be called his "ontology of tradition," and these passages I have quoted appear quite late in the book.

In fact, Putnam's final words are rather confused. Having carefully laid out his explanation of rationality and its exercise, he becomes uneasy; he seems to want it to *go* somewhere. After describing our "truly human dialogue," he asks the further question, "Does the dialogue have an ideal terminus?" How can it possibly matter, unless Putnam still wants to find a foundation of some sort, and hopes this "terminus" will do? The aphoristic concluding sentence is especially ponderous: "The very fact that we speak of our different conceptions of *rationality* posits a *Grenzbegriff,* a limit-concept of the ideal truth."

III.

I have reserved discussion of Richard Rorty's work for last because its main subject is really the relation between professional philosophy and culture as a whole. Someone recently said that there

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are two kinds of academic philosophers in Britian and the United States today: those who worry if a bundle of twigs remains the same bundle if one of the twigs is removed, and those who are doing therapy for people who would take such questions seriously. Rorty is the prototypical therapist, trying—almost obsessively—to relieve his patients of what someone else has called "Cartesian anxiety." How, he wonders, did philosophy become sundered from the rest of Western culture, turn into a "profession," and start appropriating to itself the authority to adjudicate claims to knowledge, in morals, science, religion, literature, and the arts? Much of his work is an attempt to answer this question by reciting the history of modern university philosophy. In this historical narrative, Rorty praises his heroes—Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Dewey—who are more unified in their reaction to foundationalism than in a shared program of what philosophy should be.

As a work of intellectual criticism, Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) has already had an impact on academic philosophy—especially among young graduate students—and is one of the few serious books by a philosophy professor to be widely read recently by literary critics and other intellectuals. (He has already been misread by Harold Bloom and Richard Poirier.) His collection of essays, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), covers much the same historical ground but also puts forward a fuller account of his conception of "philosophy's future" after it gives up the quest for certainty. It is in this latter task that Rorty's vision becomes clearer and its shortcomings more apparent.

Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature begins at the dawn of modern philosophy and asks how "the invention of the mind" took place in the work of Descartes. Rorty suggests that the rather unintuitive Cartesian claim—that there is an ontological gap between mind and body—came to have power over Western philosophy through an *ocular* metaphor: the "Eye of the Mind," which served as a mirror of external nature. To the ancients, the mind was our "glassy essence," but with Descartes reason became separated from mind, as, eventually, did knowledge. This ocular metaphor is now so firmly rooted in Western culture, Rorty suggests, that the only way to question it is to step outside our own world into a world of science fiction. He does this by inventing the planet of "the Antipodeans." The Antipodeans, it turns out, never had a Descartes, so instead of saying things like, "I think my tooth aches," they report, "My C-fibers are fir-

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ing." The Antipodeans have no trouble getting along without a concept of mind (or a philosophy of mind), and their "physicalism" does not rob them of their dignity, because they have never thought to wedge "the mind" between themselves and nature. Rorty's conclusion is that if the Antipodeans do not have trouble living without mind-body dualism, neither should we.

Without a mind-body problem, do we really have an "epistemological" problem either? The largest section of the book is devoted to this question, for Rorty believes that, at least since Kant, university philosophy has been obsessed with the pursuit of certainty in a theory of knowledge, to the exclusion of almost all else. This is perhaps most evident in moral philosophy in this century, where persuasive discussions of the "good life" or of "right action" have been generally abandoned for the meta-ethical question, "How can we possibly *know* what is good and right?" As questions of content in the realms of science, religion, and morals are reduced to "nothing but" questions of method and certainty, we find that philosophy has removed itself from mainstream cultural discourse and has substituted *"confrontation* for *conversation* as the determinate of our belief." Philosophy had a chance to break out of this epistemological straitjacket with the writings of Nietzsche, Bergson, James, Dewey, and Bradley, but the arrival of Russell and Husserl meant that "the spirit of playfulness which seemed about to enter philosophy around 1900 was, however, nipped in the bud."

"Playfulness" was an unhappy word to choose, as was Rorty's description of the proper role of philosophy professors as that of "informed dilettantes." Critics have taken these sentences out of context to charge Rorty unfairly with anti-intellectualism. For narrow intellectual confrontation, Rorty wants to substitute a wide-ranging hermeneutic conversation in which every realm of culture is brought forward for discussion, explanation, and reasoned defense. He relies on the continental conception of "hermeneutics," not as a method of interpretation that establishes truth absolutely, but as a metaphor for the kind of conversation which should take place in a healthy culture: "Hermeneutics is what we get when we are no longer epistemological."

The thought of giving up the search for firm foundations frightens us somewhat, for the ocular metaphor of mind is, by now, deeply ingrained in our culture (and metaphors can be more tenacious than ideas). In traditional psychoanalytic fashion, Rorty

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assures us that much of our concern is unnecessary, for "we should not regret our inability to perform a feat which no one has any idea how to perform." Yet a significant element of our intuitive defense of foundationalism is noble, for we daily find ourselves defending science and reason against their enemies. Rorty understands that "the ideals of the Enlightenment not only are our most precious cultural heritage but are in danger of disappearing as totalitarian states swallow up more and more of humanity."

Is it possible to defend reason and extend it without reifying it into foundationalism? Is it possible to think of intellectual life as a conversation without succumbing to a barbaric relativism? Rorty believes it is, if we have a somewhat conservative, "Whiggish" sense of hermeneutics and the "given" nature of the world:

> The question is not whether human knowledge in fact has foundations, "but whether it makes sense to suggest it does. . . . [Rejecting foundationalism] is merely to say that nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and that there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence.

We can only engage in the conversation with reference to what preceded us, but that is not the end:

> The fact that hermeneutics inevitably takes some norm for granted makes it, so far forth, "Whiggish." But insofar as it proceeds nonreductively and in the hope of picking up a new angle on things, it can transcend its own Whiggishness.

The importance, indeed the inevitability, of taking "the given" for granted in the beginning of a conversation can mean little more than working out from a tradition of discourse, even if Rorty does not use the word. That a consideration of tradition and our interaction with it is the next step in his argument becomes more apparent when he discusses education in hermeneutics:

> . . . we can afford [philosophy] only after having passed through stages of implicit, and then explicit and self-conscious, conformity to the norms of the discourses going on around us. . . . education—even of the revolutionary or prophet—needs to begin with acculturation and conformity merely to provide a cautionary

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> complement to the "existentialist" claims that normal participation in normal discourse is merely one project, one way of being in the world. The caution amounts to saying that abnormal and "existential" discourse is always parasitic upon normal discourse. . . .

Regrettably, the end of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is as confused as the end of Putnam's *Reason, Truth and History,* though over a different issue. While Putnam wants to conclude that his "rationality" will develop to some ideal terminus, Rorty faces the problem of placing philosophy within the conversation he describes. Relying on Michael Oakeshott's essay, "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind," Rorty sees culture as a discussion in which voices are somewhat distinct; but if that is the case, what is philosophy's "voice"? Does it even have one?

In his essays he speaks with great respect of the highbrow critics who have preserved the history of philosophy outside the academy, because "developing attitudes toward the mighty dead and their rivals . . . is the whole point of highbrow culture." Later he writes that "although philosophy has no essence, it does have a history." We might conclude that Rorty wants philosophers to be guardians of the history of the Western "conversation," though his rather careless use of language makes the depth of his own commitment to that history somewhat questionable. He would like to see philosophers become "informed dilettantes" able to pass "rapidly from Hemingway to Proust to Hitler to Marx to Foucault to Mary Douglas to the present situation in Southeast Asia to Gandhi to Sophocles." In a Goethe or Hegel—even in a Trilling or Wilson—breadth is a virtue, but such men were certainly *not* "dilettantes." Rorty is undoubtedly correct that academic philosophy today is neither really deep nor broad, and his efforts at broadening his colleagues by introducing them to important continental writers are indeed admirable, but his emphasis on intellectual breadth has been so consistent to the exclusion of other ends that many have understandably thought him a relativist at heart. As Alasdair MacIntyre complained in an otherwise favorable review of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in the *London Review of Books,* "If I am doomed to spending the rest of my life talking with literary critics and sociologists and historians and physicists, I am going to listen to a great deal of philosophy, much of it inept."

The bind in which Rorty has placed himself is that, while he

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does not want philosophy to be *everything,* he does not want it to be any *one* thing either. If academic philosophy makes any transcendental claims, Rorty criticizes it for believing that there is a "foundation" for truth; but if philosophers then profess they are merely specialists by virtue of their logic or argumentative skill, Rorty dismisses them as narrow academics who have turned their backs on highbrow culture. Rorty defines his own position as "pragmatic," but drives pragmatists crazy by comparing Dewey to Heidegger. Indeed, in a recent essay in honor of Sidney Hook, he writes that he would like to see "pragmatism (stripped of 'method') and 'Continental' philosophy (stripped of 'depth')" come together.

The reason Rorty's position *seems* so incoherent, I think, is that people refuse to take him at his word: that he thinks not only the quest for certainty, but philosophy itself, is washed up. He contrasts "Philosophy"—and its transcendentalist aims—with "philosophy," and by the latter he only means the other voices in the Western cultural conversation—art, literature, music, criticism, science. His dream is of a "post-Philosophic culture . . . in which men and women felt themselves alone, merely finite, with no link to something Beyond." Rorty's conclusion, then, is far more radical than Goodman's or Putnam's: the latter two want merely to rid philosophy of its reductionism and foundationalism, while Rorty seems to want to rid philosophy of . . . philosophy.

IV.

Americans are not nihilists: no matter how hard we try to understand and even claim the existential doctrines of Europe, something in American life (or imagination) militates against it. While there are many bad reasons why continental philosophy has never flourished here, the one good reason is that its premises are so utterly foreign to our experience—in a way that European literature and art, for instance, are not.

Perhaps more than anything else, it is their "Americanness" that strikes one first about Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty. In the European context, the critiques they level against analytical philosophy would have driven them to French post-structuralism or German hermeneutics for succour. But this has not happened here. Except for the work of Rorty, who Americanizes every European he discusses, the rising antifoundationalism in American philosophy is,

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for better or worse, developing outside of continental influences and continental categories. Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Hans-George Gadamer—these continental philosophers whose work impinges on all the questions American philosophy is now examining, and who have become so influential in American literary and social studies, are not central to this new American philosophical tendency.

All in all, this is probably a good thing. For what these American writers bring to the postmodern philosophic enterprise is their cultural pragmatism—but a pragmatism shorn of its faith in exact scientific method, and self-conscious about language, logic, and its limits. Rorty is the only one of the three to call himself a pragmatist, though students of Dewey would probably deny him that appellation if they could. When Rorty writes critically of pragmatic "method" and continental "depth" he is, I think, speaking for Goodman and Putnam as well; these two paths have already been rejected. The question remains whether a third, nonrelativistic path remains.

To judge by their most recent work, it can be said that neither Goodman, Putnam, nor Rorty knows for sure. It seems to me that they are all on roughly the right track, but none pushes his argument quite far enough. Even if we no longer believe that objective methods can provide sure foundations in morals, art, architecture, literary criticism, science, or even philosophy, something tells us there has to be something firmer than just "rightness," "rationality for us," or hermeneutic "conversation." Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty vaguely suggest that truth and meaning are always connected with something previously "given," a certain social tradition, but they do not make much philosophically from this fact.

What these writers do not yet seem to have realized is that by deconstructing the analytic philosopher's program of securing "timeless" foundations for human knowledge, they have implicitly raised the question of how human knowledge *relates to time.* Perhaps I should say "reraised," since the genesis of knowledge has been a question for philosophy since the *Republic,* though since Hegel it has not been considered a very interesting epistemological issue. But the genetic path—the inquiry into human knowledge as *Bildung,* as the product of human societies rooted in time—may be the only nonnihilistic path available to these American philosophers.

Oddly enough, they do not seem to have studied the counter-

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Enlightenment stream of thought beginning with Vico—a tributary, really—that treats the genesis of knowledge as being at the root of philosophical inquiry.

Within contemporary continental philosophy, it is Hans-Georg Gadamer, following his teacher Heidegger, who sees this most clearly, and who has made the issues of "the given" and tradition central to his work. With contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, only British thinker Michael Oakeshott, beginning with his much neglected *Experience and its Modes* (1933), has tried to fully account for the genetic character of human knowledge. Oakeshott and his conception of philosophy seem especially relevant to the work of Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty. For example, in 1933 Oakeshott wrote, in almost Goodmanesque fashion, that philosophy begins when one recognizes "the given," where "the given in thought is the complex situation in which we find ourselves in the first moments of consciousness." We soon learn, however, that "the conditions of the given world is never such that it may merely be acquiesced in"; rather, we actively acquire knowledge through "the creation of a new world by transforming a given world." And this new world is "more of a world."

Not only are the artifacts of the world in which we are born given, he argues, but so are our mentalities: language, logic, science, history, morals, religious practices, and, yes, even philosophy. The very faculties with which we "carve up" the world we seek to explain are themselves a part of, and derive their meaning within, a tradition rooted in time. Oakeshott put it quite beautifully in one of his later essays:

> As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extending and made more articulate over the course of centuries.

This is not to belittle human knowledge; it is to see it in perspective, to see that it is ours and that we are responsible for passing it on. Philosophy, in Oakeshott's view, stands within this framework, and is the self-conscious attempt to encompass and explain critically, without arrest, the conversation as a whole: ". . . the main business of philosophy [is] to determine its own character . . . it is at

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once the field and the battle." Philosophy is an *activity,* not a method or a revelation, and as such it cannot be divorced from its history or the people who conduct it.

I have no idea whether Goodman, Putnam, and Rorty will turn to these interesting issues now that foundational philosophy is, in a sense, behind them. In summarizing and quoting from their work I have tried to highlight those sections that refer to the role of tradition and convention in passing on concepts and categories. Each seems to recognize the importance of the past in "worldmaking," "rationality for us," and "conversation," but none drives that insight to a radical conclusion about philosophy and the genesis of knowledge. This is no criticism of their work as such, for they have, until now, been mainly interested in subverting modern analytic philosophy. But I do not see how they can now avoid a deeper examination of tradition, or of the "given," as they themselves refer to it.

Indeed, I would even go so far as to say that the examination of tradition, the return to "the given," is at the heart of the postmodern enterprise. When one ends the quest for certainty one finds oneself not, as the existentialists thought, alone, but, in Edward Shils's phrase, "in the presence of things past." The revival of interest in the past in the arts, architecture, even literary criticism, is not simply a reaction to the disappointments of modernism, a longing for a warmer, more coherent world. It reflects a recognition of the fact that we cannot fully transcend the world in which we are born. We can take the one we inherit, extend it, criticize it, reorder it, but we can never completely rise above it.

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Michael McPherson

ON SCHELLING, HIRSCHMAN, AND SEN: REVISING THE CONCEPTION OF THE SELF

A common theme in the recent work of Amartya Sen, Albert Hirschman, and Thomas Schelling is that the peculiarly resilient but abstract conception of "economic man" that continues to underlie most economic analysis has come to be an impediment to the deeper understanding of some important features of social reality. It is of further interest that all three thinkers, while starting from a concern to make economics more intellectually coherent and convincing, wind up by making it morally deeper as well.

One must revert to the "turn" that modern economics took two hundred years ago to appreciate the significance of this new direction. The economics of Francis Hutcheson, the teacher of Adam Smith, was embedded in the conceptions of moral obligations and duties, and the social unit was the household. Starting with Adam Smith, economics began to detach itself from institutions—from moral economy and even political economy—and in the end to concern itself only with a single activity, *economizing*. To do so, it made a number of crucial, simplifying assumptions. It took the individual as the actor; it assumed he could and would act rationally and that he would seek to maximize his gains and minimize his losses. When one added a metric to these ideas, one could quantify the amounts of supply and demand (as reflected in monetary units) and set up elegant equations to chart the interactions of these variables. Some writers, notably Thorstein Veblen, C. E. Ayres, and John Kenneth Galbraith, questioned the absence of their institutional settings, but cogent as these challenges were, they themselves could only be historical or descriptive, not analytical. What Schelling, Hirschman, and Sen are doing is questioning, from within, the conception of the "rational actor" seeking only to advance his gain, and showing how attention to the complexities of human motivation can enrich economic analysis. More technically, they are questioning the utilitarianism which underlies neoclassical economic theory.

It is a matter of taste or definition whether or not to label the economic man who populates most economic theory "selfish." A number of the particular results of familiar economic models—in-

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cluding most claims for the virtues of the free market—do depend on supposing that economic actors look out only for themselves; but no insurmountable theoretical problems are posed by allowing that such actors may want to promote the well-being of their family, friends, or even strangers.

What goes much deeper, however, is the assumption that each person does indeed have *some* well-defined set of wants, even if they are partly altruistic, and the further assumption that that set of wants—the individual's ordering of his preferences—is single, stable, and consistent. In neoclassical economic theory, the person simply *is* his "preference ordering" and a great deal depends on the assumption that those preferences stay put. Deep-seated problems about the nature and character of wants, problems thoughtfully probed by economists of earlier generations including Alfred Marshall, Thorstein Veblen, and Frank Knight are swept away by that assumption. Disturbing questions can be raised about a social system that helps to generate the very wants it satisfies. But such issues are conveniently bypassed in neoclassical theory by supposing that the wants in question are simply "given." The assumption of stable tastes also underlies the empirical analysis of demands for goods and services: it is because tastes remain the same that we can suppose that measurement of past responses of consumers to changes in prices and incomes will allow us successfully to predict future changes.

The conception of the self as a fixed and unitary bundle of preferences shapes the economist's view not only of the *results* of market behavior but of the *processes* of economic choice as well. Ambivalence has no natural place in the theory: the mental struggle of the dieter in front of the refrigerator—or more poignantly of the alcoholic in front of the bottle—is brushed aside. The human drive for self-development is likewise gone: neoclassical preference theory cannot accommodate Frank Knight's intriguing suggestion that "what the commonsense individual really wants is not satisfaction for the wants he has, but more *and better* wants." And the peculiarly human capability to stand in judgment of our own wants—so well captured in Dostoevsky's underground man who can despise his craven self and simultaneously at another level feel liberated by his own depravity—is a capability utterly foreign to the neoclassical view.

Neoclassical actors, with their single, all-purpose preference

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functions, lack depth—depth of motivation, depth of reflection, depth of commitment to ideals. Amartya Sen has suggested that the current generation of economists, in squeezing down the richer formulations of forebears like Smith, Marshall, and Knight to fit their formal requirements, have succeeded in making "molehills out of mountains." Economics is of course not psychoanalysis, and economists understandably worry that embracing these complexities will cause their studies to lose generality and detachment. The importance of the work described below lies in showing that it is possible for economists to move at least some distance into these depths without sinking.

* * *

Consider first Thomas Schelling. Schelling's past work on strategic interactions among individuals and groups has left an enduring mark on economics and social theory. This *strategic* element is present whenever one actor's best "move" depends on how his counterparts act, and that the actor is aware that his counterparts see things the same way.

The quintessential modern example of such strategic interaction is the nuclear arms race, and Schelling's early analyses of the dilemmas of deterrence in *The Strategy of Conflict* formed the foundation of the academic subject "strategic studies." But Schelling was also the first to see clearly that these strategic elements can arise not just when there is conflict, but also when people simply want to coordinate their activities. A characteristic Schelling example: you are to meet your friend in New York at an appointed day and time. But regrettably you and your friend neglected to agree on a meeting place, and now she is out of touch. Can you think of the place your friend will guess, knowing that she is trying to guess the place you will think of? The answer, revealingly, will depend on the history of your relationship, but, lacking a special history, you and your friend (with a little luck) will both wind up under the clock in Grand Central Station. What happens when there is a lack of coordination? Each person may want the freedom to move about as he pleases, with his automobile, free of the constraints of railroad or airline. Yet, when all go out at the same time (morning or evening), there is congestion, which is paid for by each individual, unwillingly, in idling time. More generally, neoclassical theory assumes that all

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"micro" decisions will be coordinated effortlessly by the market into a desired "macro" correspondence. Yet, as Schelling points out, the reach of the market in coordinating such decisions is far from unlimited: what the individual wishes for himself, in the aggregate often becomes a nightmare.

Schelling's shrewd and patient reflections on examples like these have deepened our understanding of the rules and conventions we rely on to coordinate (or fail to coordinate) our activities and manage our conflicts. Indeed, Schelling's pathbreaking work has given rise to a substantial philosophical and sociological literature on the rational analysis of norms and conventions. (Two important books are David K. Lewis's, *Convention,* and Edna Ullman-Margalit's, *The Emergence of Norms.*)

The latest turn in Schelling's thought has been toward the provocative idea that these phenomena of strategic interaction are important not only *between* but *within* persons. Schelling suggests we should for some purposes see the person as the locus of a temporal sequence of conflicting selves, rather than as the seamless, consistent chooser of neoclassical economics. Lionel Trilling, in *Sincerity and Authenticity,* his important book on the evolution of modern notions of selfhood, quoted a Victorian critic who saw Jane Austen's conception of the self as "a battlefield where contending hosts are marshalled and where victory inclines now to one side and now to another." It is this image that Schelling proposes we take seriously.

The examples of intrapersonal conflict—what Schelling calls the examples of "self-command"—that come to mind are intimate, and often seem whimsical or trivial: the struggling dieter, the reluctant runner, the compulsive TV watcher. But in fact such conflicts are not trivial either in human or financial terms. Schelling calculates convincingly that we would collectively pay in the billions to be, painlessly, free of the desire to smoke. (Most smokers, surveys show, wish they didn't want to—a different proposition from, wanting to, not smoking, and different again from embarking on a painful regimen aimed at extinguishing the desire.) Sometimes the conflicts reach tragic proportions: the painfully ill person who *sometimes* wants to die; the sometimes loving parents who sometimes beat their children; the compulsive gamblers or drug addicts.

Schelling's strategic perspective casts light on the attempts we make, with varying success, to control those other selves within us who scheme to get around our constraints. It is hard for the person

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who has sworn off cigarettes to hide the package where his other, nicotine-addicted self can't remember where to find it. And negotiation, so often the key to resolving conflicts between persons, is peculiarly difficult when the selves, being only sequentially present, cannot sit down to talk. Moreover, Schelling observes, law and society generally withhold help in achieving self-control that could, in principle, be provided. I cannot sentence my overeating self to be locked onto a "fat farm" against my (his?) will, nor can I make a binding agreement to be put to death when certain bodily or mental deteriorations occur, certainly not over the pleas of my deteriorated self to be allowed to live.

It is a good question why a society as committed as ours is to free contract, blocks this range of agreements. Part of the answer, Schelling stresses, is that it is sometimes far from obvious which is the authentic self whom the law should heed: dieting can shade into anorexia, self-control into obsessive self-denial. But while law and policy are probably right for the most part to try to stay out of such intrapersonal disputes, we cannot be so standoffish with our dieting friends. To whom should we listen when these divided selves ask for our aid? Schelling does not offer ready answers, but insists, most especially in light of our increasing capacity to prolong lives of marginal value, upon the importance of the question.

But this question, and indeed the very phenomenon of conflicting preference systems within the self, cannot be formulated within the standard neoclassical theory of rational choice. A thoughtless allegiance to that conception of the person can therefore blind us to the features of reality that Schelling wants us to ponder. A number of other theorists have recently been exploring ways of modifying the theory of rational choice to account for phenomena of preference conflict and "imperfect rationality." These include Gordon Winston's, *The Timing of Economic Activities,* Jon Elster's, *Ulysses and the Sirens: Essays on Rationality and Irrationality* and Howard Margolis's, *Altruism, Selfishness and Rationality.*

As these works show, maxims that apply perfectly well to the seamless world of the unitary self can be positively dangerous when misapplied to situations of intrapersonal conflict. Thus the familiar notion that a wider range of choice always improves welfare breaks down: would any of us really welcome a device that made instant, painless, unreflected suicide a permanent option? Neither does improved information always lead to better decisions: would it really

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be a favor to disabuse a newly recovered alcoholic of his carefully cultivated belief that the first drink will kill him?

If one were to presume to draw a methodological moral from Schelling's story (something he himself is careful not to do), it might be this: Neoclassical theory, if it recognized these conflicts at all, could do so only to disapprove; such conflicts mark an imperfection, a *failure* of rationality which, if anything, the hapless drunk might be urged to overcome. Schelling, however, presents such conflict as more basic and enduring in all our lives, something we'd better get used to and learn to live with. Instead of disapproval, Schelling offers sympathetic understanding (many of his examples are drawn from his own wayward life) and a friendly desire to help.

Albert Hirschman is more explicit about adopting an understanding attitude toward the characters in his recent book, *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action.* Hirschman sets out to explain why individuals and whole societies seem to oscillate between periods of intense involvement with politics, and periods of preoccupation with private affairs. Were life all a matter of getting the most of our "one, all-purpose preference system," then we might expect individuals and societies to exhibit rather a static inclination to politics: in or out for a lifetime depending on their preferences. At most, we would expect people to adjust smoothly and gradually "on the margin" to shifts in the perceived costs and benefits of political involvement. But instead, shifts in involvement do occur, for individuals and whole societies; and such shifts tend to be abrupt and substantial, not smooth and marginal (as the paroxysm of the 1960s reminds us).

Why so? The answer derives in part from Hirschman's emphasis on an aspect of the inner life that is left aside in Schelling's picture of "warring selves." (Trilling himself, interestingly enough, was not entirely happy with his Victorian friend's portrayal of Austen's view of the moral life as one of "warring selves." What was missing was precisely that element of reflection, that aspiration for conformity to an ideal, that Hirschman develops.) That aspect we might call "reflectiveness": our capacity, indeed our compulsion, to stand in judgment of our own preferences. One way that compulsion expresses itself is in the need we feel to find some ideological justification for the patterns of our lives. Thus, the political activist finds pleasure, often, in the intense pace of his efforts, in the attachments he forms, perhaps in the attention he gets—but all this is

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conditioned on the confirming reflection that these pleasures are in step with the larger good his political involvements promote. Let the pleasures turn to tedium, the friendships to mistrust, and the activist will still be sustained, for a while, by the reflection that he *ought* to want to do politics. But the commitments of a person in that spot have become brittle. He has become ripe for a reordering of his preferences and a revision of the ideological "metapreference" that judges the preference ordering. Should the larger ends of his politics fall into doubt, the tedium, the strain, and the inevitable disappointments can be acknowledged: what had seemed not only fun but a good way of life can be recast as a life petty, corrupt, or trivial. Not just a recalibration of the balance of public and private pleasures, but a revulsion against, and so an abrupt withdrawal from politics is the likely result.

So, too, it is in moving from private to public. A life devoted to the private pleasures of consumption is equally in need of a larger ideological justification. Hirschman notes the way that Adam Smith and other eighteenth-century thinkers supplied such a rationale for the emerging commercial classes of that era, showing how their pursuit of private interest might conduce to the public weal. And similarly the contented consumer, homeowner, do-it-yourselfer of the 1950s was seeking not only a set of distinct pleasures, but was also in some measure trying to live a version of the American dream. But new gadgets and new vistas of consumer expenditure too can pall. As such "rivulets of disappointment" build up, the *point* of it all, the larger justification for concentration on private affairs, can come into doubt. And so the consumer becomes ripe for a new set of preferences and a new confirming metapreference, ones that may propel him back into politics with considerable velocity.

Hirschman's book reads like a novel – a *Bildungsroman* he styles it at one point. This is important because his characters have *histories,* a dimension (like intrapersonal conflict) that neoclassical actors conspicuously lack. The historical dimension brings with it a vulnerability to confusion, to guilt, and to mistakes. The rational consumer-voters of neoclassical political economy, lacking such histories and motivational complexities, can be expected to perform without the ambiguities and oscillations Hirschman has characterized. But the neoclassical theories turn out, unfortunately for their analytical adequacy, to leave notably less room for ambiguity than the reality they aim to describe. Hirschman cites the example of Mancur Olson's

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influential book, *The Logic of Collective Action,* which demonstrated the impossibility of large scale political action just before the uprising against the war in Vietnam broke out.

Hirschman views the disabilities of his disappointment-prone and self-judgmental actors as valuable not only for the descriptive merits of his theory, but for the richness of their lives as well. As Hirschman says, "They are superior to the 'rational actor' inasmuch as they can conceive of *various* states of happiness, are able to transcend one in order to achieve the other, and thus escape from the boredom of permanently operating on the basis of a single, stable set of preferences. Quite likely, these nobler and richer qualities of our actors are closely related to their bungling and blundering ways."

Both Schelling and Hirschman like to stay close to the ground of example and historical narrative: they yield up theoretical generalizations and especially moral implications only reluctantly and with considerable circumspection. In some respects Amartya Sen stands at an opposite extreme. There are few economists in the world with a comparable flair for abstract analysis, and fewer with a comparable penchant for explicit moral theorizing. And yet the results of Sen's investigations in the fields of welfare economics and social choice theory—the economists' label for the systematic formal study of the ethical implications of economic arrangements—bear a considerable kinship with the work of Hirschman and Schelling. For Sen's persistent point has been that it is crucial not to give up the moral essentials of the problems of social choice in the attempt to make them analytically tractable. His gift as a theorist has been to find ways to give formal expression to those features of personal and social valuation that slip through the cracks of standard neoclassical formulations. And some of these features are the same ones that Hirschman and Schelling have been concerned with.

A good example is the "metapreference" notion, developed independently by Sen and the philosopher Harry Frankfurt, and borrowed by Hirschman for his analysis of ideology. In the usual neoclassical formulation, a person is simply a bundle of preferences, and his moral ideals, if they enter the analysis at all, enter simply as some among his preferences—his taste for honesty being on a par with his taste for peanut butter. The difficulties with such a formulation are several. First, it leaves no room for the commonsense idea that a person may live up to his moral ideals at the expense of satisfying his preferences. We need not endorse a particular person's con-

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ception of duty to see the advantage of finding language that allows us to distinguish between the person doing his *duty* (by his lights) and doing what he *prefers*. This distinction makes no sense if one's conception of duty is just part of one's preferences. By the same token, such a formulation has no place for the Aristotelian notion of *akrasia* or weakness of will: you cannot fall short of your ideals by yielding to your preferences if the former are part of the latter. And finally—the issue most relevant to Hirschman—the idea of *changing* your preferences to conform to your ideals, what we might call moral aspiration, makes no sense on the neoclassical assumption of unchanging preferences.

Sen has suggested that these problems can be overcome by describing a moral ideal not as a preference among states of affairs, like other preferences, but rather a preference *among* preferences: an expression of what it is you would prefer to want. Such a preference, naturally called a "second-order preference" or "metapreference," draws an appropriate distinction of levels between ideals and preferences, and clearly creates a useful framework for analyzing *akrasia* and preference change.

This example illustrates a number of features that characterize Sen's work more generally. The first job of serious ethical analysis, formal or informal, is to get an adequate description of the moral phenomena in question. Given the intricacies of real moral judgment and deliberation, this is likely to require some considerable complexity in the basic formulation of the problem—in particular a richer conception of the person than neoclassical theory will allow. Formal theorizing helps principally by providing an analytical apparatus capable of expressing these complexities with precision.

Such a stress on the inherent complexity of moral reasoning implies a characteristic attitude toward the project of moral theory. Systematic moral thinking should cease being so preoccupied with deciding which oversimplified system of moral thinking is right and aim instead at developing the analytical and conceptual capacity to describe ways of thinking about morality that are rich enough to have at least a chance of being helpful. Any adequate moral theory will have to have room for both Kantian and utilitarian aspects. And it will also have to allow for the great importance we attach to securing individual rights—as Robert Nozick insists—while avoiding the blindness to consequences in defining those rights, that Nozick's theory displays, blindness that can lead to the sorts of disturbing

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results described in Sen's book, *Poverty and Famines,* where the emphasis on property rights led to people starving to death.

Any adequate moral theory will at least for now have to acknowledge the wide ranges of significant moral questions that we just don't know how to answer. Useful approaches will be partial and overlapping rather than unitary and complete. This stance implies a certain humility about our present understanding of moral truths. As Thomas Nagel has recently observed, "The idea that the basic principles of morality are known, and that the problems all come in their interpretation and application, is one of the most fantastic conceits to which our conceited species has been drawn." Some of the leading moral philosophers of our time—Thomas Nagel, Derek Parfit, and Bernard Williams among them—share with Sen this exploratory attitude, but until recently Sen was almost unique among leading economic theorists in supposing that these basic ethical questions are worth looking into. Instead most economists who have worked on evaluative questions have supposed that the basic principles are utilitarian, and have focused precisely on their interpretation and application, especially their mathematical elaboration.

But Sen has lately begun to make some converts to his view that more complex views of the person can be incorporated in formal analysis of social choice without any compromise in standards of analytical rigor. Coming to grips systematically with those features of our moral experience that utilitarianism neglects or overrides seems a much more worthy challenge for the formidable skills of welfare economists than any further elaboration on utilitarianism's hoary themes of optimalities.

The essays by economists and philosophers in the recent collection in *Utilitarianism and Beyond* edited by Sen and Bernard Williams aptly demonstrate the headway that Sen's approach has begun to make. The analytical agenda suggested by these essays and by Sen's own recent work is formidable. The issues range from reappraisal of the ethical significance of traditional measures of economic welfare and its distribution, to revised conceptions of human liberty and equality. One comes away with a realization that both the formal exercises of neoclassical welfare economics and the rather tired philosophers' debates between utilitarian and Kantian ethics have managed to leave much of the most interesting moral territory quite unexplored.

The brand of moral theorizing Sen and his colleagues engage in

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is intellectually and, at times, technically demanding. It will not please those who suppose that a pure heart is sufficient license to speak with authority on moral matters. But the best of this new analytical work is refreshingly free of dogma and itself displays a seriousness of moral purpose that keeps technical innovation properly subordinate to genuine illumination. No one would want to claim that this relatively formalized mode of ethical discourse ever could or should supplant more literary and informal modes. But Sen's work does demonstrate that formal reasoning in ethics is by no means condemned to utilitarian or other crudities.

* * *

These three theorists, Sen, Schelling, and Hirschman, are, in different voices and with different techniques, pointing the way to an economics that would incorporate within itself a richer conception of the person and a broader framework of moral assessment of social policies and institutions. The goal of this work is by no means the overthrow of existing economic theory. None of these thinkers is, by temperament or argument, a revolutionary. Economics has, in any event, never lacked for critics who stand outside it and urge its overthrow. What is unique and intriguing about these theorists is that, starting from positions of influence and respect within the economics profession, they are urging its enrichment and modification—and, significantly, they are doing their urging not so much through methodological preachment as through the example of work that transcends the limitations they identify.

An economics that developed in the directions these thinkers anticipate need not give up its hard-won claims to analytical detachment. Indeed, by probing more deeply the complexities of personal and social choice, such a study could plausibly claim to have gained at once in scientific reputability and in moral seriousness.

Such an economics would, moreover, still retain a substantial place for the preference-maximizing view of choice and for the utilitarian mode of social evaluation. But the place would be precisely that of a simplification, a special case, a partial view. What economics would lose through acknowledging the limitations of that view would be its claims to *decisiveness* and *completeness*. Neoclassical actors lack, in their personal conduct, the *human* traits of ambivalence, hesitation, and doubt. And utilitarian social evaluation is

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similarly confident and complete in its judgments. However tormenting or tragic a moral dilemma may appear, utilitarianism—with its pleasure/pain, cost/benefit analyzing—offers an unambiguous method for grinding out an answer to it. Uncertainties and measurement problems may make the *computation* of the answer doubtful or difficult, but those are seen as technical not moral difficulties. But the price of this completeness and decisiveness at both personal and social levels is, as we have seen, to cast out of the reach of theory those discomfiting features of real conduct and of real moral deliberations that don't fit. It is almost as if neoclassical theorists worried that analyses that incorporated the real world phenomena of confusion, ambivalence, and doubt would themselves be infected by those features—would be confused and dubious analyses.

An economics that incorporated some of these recalcitrant features of human choice, and that acknowledged the partiality of its usual view, would indeed be in some ways less sure of itself—more qualified in its predictions, less absolute in its judgments, more modest about the social guidance its technical analyses can give. But much of that self-certainty is, anyway, bluff. As Albert Hirschman put it in concluding a recent essay: "After so many failed prophecies, is it not in the interest of social science to embrace complexity, be it at some sacrifice of its claim to predictive power?"

We are saddened by the death of MANÈS SPERBER, a friend and contributor.

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Sanford Levinson

On Dworkin, Kennedy, and Ely: Decoding the Legal Past

If one had asked ten years ago which contemporary philosophers were of greatest relevance to legal thought, the answers almost certainly would have been H. L. A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin of Oxford, and John Rawls and Robert Nozick of Harvard. Whatever their substantial differences, they were the vital participants in two central debates. One, between Hart and Dworkin, concerned the question of what is distinctively "legal" in the social system; the issue was whether Hart's legal positivism was sufficiently sensitive to the role of moral principles as constitutive of law itself. Rawls and Nozick, on the other hand, were engaged in a debate about the nature of distributive justice. The question—what constitutes the just state—was pervasive, as was the secondary question, elaborated more directly by law professors: What is the role of the *judiciary* in imposing a "true" conception of the just state on a populace whose elected legislators may have held contrary convictions? The two debates were obviously not unrelated. David Richards of the New York University Law School, for example, strongly asserted that Rawls's notion of equality was part of the background morality of the American Constitution, and therefore, the enforcement of that notion by the judiciary was legitimate.

These philosophers have not passed into irrelevance. Yet, for whatever reason, including the sheer exhaustion of what more can be said about *A Theory of Justice* or *Anarchy, State, and Utopia,* the 1980s are different. The philosophers likely to be referred to today are Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, and John Searle. Literary theorists such as Stanley Fish, E. D. Hirsch, and Terry Eagleton come into discussions. European thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Jürgen Habermas also are increasingly cited by legal academics. Indeed, the present state of legal theory is exemplified by the fact that Ronald Dworkin is currently engaged in a vigorous, not to say bitter, debate with Stanley Fish about the nature of textual interpretation. And Robert Cover of Yale titled his November 1983 "Foreword" to the annual *Harvard Law Review* assessment of the Supreme Court, *NOMOS and Narrative,* an essay replete

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with references not only to Gadamer, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, but also to classical theories of Talmudic interpretation.

In short, American legal thought, like many other contemporary disciplines, is now engaged in a renewed appreciation of the centrality of hermeneutic concerns: "[T]he interpretive turn," as Clifford Geertz has recently described it, has as "its most visible outcome . . . a revised style of discourse" in legal studies. This turn does not, to be sure, represent something fundamentally new. On the contrary, the interest in hermeneutics signifies a return to some of the oldest concerns of legal theorists. Its re-emergence at this time, though, is nonetheless a significant development within the legal academy.

Law certainly is not unique as an enterprise that revolves around the meaning of social norms derived from texts. Yet, the impact on people's lives of an interpretation (especially by judges) of patches of legal texts is especially great. The consequence of a particular decision may concern an inheritance, an abortion in a public hospital, or the busing of one's child across town. The ever-increasing role of the judiciary, seen by some as an "imperial" role, has made the legitimacy of judicial "activism" a central political issue. Losers in legal disputes are always ready (and morally entitled) to ask for justifications; they are also often quite ready to believe that the reasons for these applications are but impositions of alien political values held by undisciplined judges. What is at stake is how we interpret the activity of the judges, and this in turn puts into question the relationship of the judges to the texts they are interpreting.

The received doctrine goes back to John Marshall. "The powers of the legislature are defined, and limited," he wrote, "and that those limits may not be mistaken, or forgotten, the constitution is written." Central to Marshall's rhetoric is the notion that it is not *he,* but the Constitution itself, which demands the result. "Judicial power, as contradistinguished from the power of the laws, has no existence. Courts are the mere instruments of the law, and can will nothing," Marshall wrote. The Court is the mere "messenger" of a Constitution whose commands are transparent.

The degree of emphasis on a textual constitution—and the concomitant status of a court as being only its messenger—is no small matter. Those who have emphasized "the liberal tradition in America," such as Louis Hartz, have focused on so-called "Lockean liber-

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alism," with its notions of natural rights. Ronald Dworkin, with his emphasis on "taking rights seriously," is very much within this tradition. From this perspective, however, the function of documents such as written constitutions is to ratify a *pre-existing* understanding of the rights held by free-born men and women. So, Dworkin's ultimate belief in a social order characterized by a shared system of political values leads him to minimize constraints upon judges allegedly imposed by the fixed text of a written constitution. And some of Marshall's decisions, such as his citation of natural justice in the 1810 case *Fletcher versus Peck,* involving the contract clause of the Constitution, support such a view.

But another aspect of the American political tradition is the deep Hobbesian fear of social chaos. This perspective leads to a narrow construction of written constitutions. The chaos of the state of nature, characterized by the absence of any significant shared norms, where every person defines "justice" in idiosyncratic and self-serving ways, is ended only by the agreement to terms whose compliance is promised by the contracting parties. Rather than a ratification of implicit norms, a written constitution quite literally "constitutes" the norms. These parties are not, however, naive enough to think that voluntary compliance will always be forthcoming. Thus they agree to set up a powerful state that can coerce unwilling individuals to keep to their promises.

In a Hobbesian world, the terms of the actual contract are far more important than in the benign Lockean one, for there is no recourse available to a background of shared values which enables the state legitimately to go beyond explicit contractual grants. This view was powerfully articulated in a 1798 opinion by Justice Iredell opposing any reliance on norms of natural justice as a source of constitutional doctrine. He argued that those alleged norms "are regulated by no fixed standard: the ablest and the purest men have differed upon the subject."

In the background of the turn toward interpretation is the centrality of the social contract metaphor in American thought. A contract demands interpretation, and it is this ubiquity of interpretation —and concern about the "accuracy" of interpretation—that provokes the anxiety that the idea of a contract was meant to still. Yet there lurks as well the specter of Friedrich Nietzsche. "Is meaning not necessarily relative meaning and perspective?" he asked. And is not "all meaning . . . [the] will to power"? Thus any such discussion

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raises the questions of relativism, epistemological and moral. And the ability to impose an authoritative decision raises the question of disinterestedness and privilege.

Why the contemporary interest? And why the "intrusion" from other fields, especially text-oriented disciplines such as literature and theology with their fixation on the issue of the "authority of the text" as against the power of the interpreter?

The answer to the first question derives clearly from the more active role of the courts in recent years, both in the reinterpretation of previous decisions, and the invocation of morality, or rights, or equity as prior to law, to be imposed by courts even against the majority will. The ancient question of *quo warranto* (by whose legitimacy) once again intrudes. And if the answer is the judge's, or legal philosopher's interpretation, the question inevitably arises as to the "objectivity" of the judge and the "transparency" of the text.

Increasingly, judicial decision-making has become difficult to analyze within the metaphor of the courts as messengers from a transparent text. We are all now aware of the importance of the judges' own values if we wish to understand the judicial process. This is not a new theme in American political discourse; the most famous "demystifiers" of judicial pretense were the American legal realists of the 1920s and '30s, such as Jerome Frank, Thurman Arnold, and others from the Yale Law School.

But there is a paradox. In that period, the opponents of judicial authority tended to be political liberals, who supported the authority of legislatures (federal and state) to govern. Justice Stone's famous dissent in *United States versus Butler,* "For the removal of unwise laws from the statute books appeal lies not to the courts but to the ballot and to the processes of democratic government," became a rallying cry for a generation of New Deal lawyers. Why the realists assumed that the statutes passed by legislatures would be interpreted "correctly" by judges was never made clear. One reason, perhaps, was the success of the New Deal in placing its adherents on the bench. It was possible to believe that fundamental conflict between the judiciary and other branches was past.

The realist critique was also vitiated, as Edward Purcell argued in *The Crisis of Democratic Theory,* by the rise of the European dictatorships, particularly Nazism. The gusto of the more radical "realists," who viewed "the rule of law" either as "infantile" (Jerome Frank) or as tribal superstition (Thurman Arnold), appeared ominous when

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seen in the context of the destruction of law in Europe. For many, there was no longer any political point to undermining respect for the judiciary. And, as the judiciary became a partner in implementing the winning coalition's program, the opposite became true.

The older liberal's faith in the primacy of legislative institutions, typified by Felix Frankfurter, became identified as conservative. Today, political liberals tend to support an active judiciary, while conservatives (or neoconservatives) are more likely to be found in opposition. Thus, for example, in *The Public Interest* in 1976, Nathan Glazer added a term to the American political lexion when he asked the rhetorical question "Towards an Imperial Judiciary?" Glazer pointed to the sweeping judicial interventions of the past two decades, in areas ranging from the public schools to the operation of state prisons and hospitals to the drawing of electoral boundary lines. "[A] free people feels itself increasingly under the arbitrary rule of unreachable authorities," asserted Glazer, "and that cannot be good for the future of the state."

Nor is the disquiet about the contemporary judiciary confined to one end of the political spectrum. The most widely reviewed book about constitutional law in the past twenty years is undoubtedly *Democracy and Distrust,* by John Hart Ely, now Dean of the Stanford Law School. It is a sign of the flux in current legal thought that Ely both admiringly dedicates his book to Chief Justice Warren, for whom he had clerked, and delivers a full-scale attack on the premise that the Supreme Court has a mandate to discover and impose "fundamental rights" on an unwilling populace.

Ely defends the Warren Court by emphasizing that most of its pathbreaking decisions were, in fact, democracy enhancing, insofar as they broadened the access of individuals to the electoral process or safeguarded their opportunities to participate vigorously in political debates.

He believes, as his title indicates, that democratic decisions lose their normal entitlement to judicial respect when there is a good reason to distrust the willingness of the majorities to give fundamental respect to the interests of losing minorities, as has historically been true in regard to white America's treatment of blacks. It is not that the latter have a right to win; rather, they must at least have a realistic chance to participate effectively in the pluralistic bargaining process, so that losses are not cumulatively disabling and are sometimes counterbalanced by wins.

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Those, however, are special circumstances. In the normal course of events Ely offers majoritarian politics alone as the legitimator of public policy. Ely can find no defense for the Court's post-Warren ventures into judicial activism, the most prominent being the 1973 abortion case *Roe versus Wade,* which invalidated restrictive abortion laws throughout the United States. Ely finds no good reason for treating the class of pregnant women seeking abortions as different from any other ordinary group of political claimants. Women are not a minority, except in a tendentiously metaphorical sense; moreover, as Justice Blackmun himself admitted in *Roe,* at least a third of the states had recently liberalized their abortion laws, so it was scarcely accurate to claim that the political process was closed to adherents of abortion reform. Ely, who politically supports liberalized abortion laws, nonetheless accords no legitimacy to the Supreme Court decision. He views it as sheer usurpation, unconnected in any plausible way to the constitutional text that gives the Court whatever authority it may have to set aside legislative will.

How seriously, however, can one take the notion of courts as interpreters "bound" by the text, so that one can truly tell when a Court has gone beyond its mandate within the Constitution? Can an interpreter ever plausibly say that there is no other available alternative reading of a text, where "available" implies staying within the interpretive conventions of the relevant community of readers? Thus one might have a Christian or a psychoanalytic reading of Jane Austen, but not an astrological one. (In Stanley Fish's homely term, the latter would be an "off the wall" reading; to be "available," a reading must be at least "on the wall" as recognized by the professional reading community, whether literary or legal, of the time.)

We may have to ask whether there are "right answers" to questions of interpretation, as distinguished from simply a multiplicity of available answers. Are there algorithms of interpretation that stipulate authoritative answers to questions about a text, assuming that the interpreter is competent? Or are texts hopelessly indeterminate? It is no answer to the argument about indeterminacy of meaning to point to admitted instances where presumably all of us indeed do "know" what a text means, for example, a sign in the London tube station indicating that "dogs must be carried up the escalator." We do share a sense of what is being said. But there is the possibility of a visitor from an alien culture going up to a ticket-seller and asking where one picks up the dogs that one must carry up the subway.

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That this is a wholly bizarre reading, one which if made by a member of our own culture would be evidence either of playfulness or insanity, does not in any way count as evidence against the linguistic possibility of interpreting the text in that way. Yet, there is the commonsense reality that we do view ourselves as able to communicate with one another. And included in this is the ability we feel to "follow" a rule, as well as an expectation that others will be able to do likewise. Otherwise, social life would be impossible.

Yet, it is this process of communication, which reduces an admittedly potential chaos of meanings (the "infinite play of signifiers") to a finite group of possible meanings, that calls for analysis. Ronald Dworkin, for example, has structured his jurisprudence around the proposition that judges are committed to seeking, and then giving, the "right answer" to legal questions, without discretion or "choice" being involved. Many of his critics point to the obvious fact that judges do not in fact agree and infer from this that a judge therefore has discretion, by an exertion of will, over what a particular decision shall be. This is, however, not responsive to Dworkin's point, which focuses on what might be termed the phenomenology of judging. Thus Stanley Fish, in his debate with Dworkin about the possibility of assigning criteria to identify the "right" answers to questions of interpretation, nonetheless agrees that the *only* answers that any particular person can give are the "right answers" from that person's perspective. What other kind of answers *could* be given, save for the conscious lie? But this psychological fact says nothing about the epistemological status of the proffered interpretation, in particular its "objectivity" or congruence with the presuppositions of belief.

Several years ago Dworkin introduced his mythic judge, Hercules, who has the task of discovering the "right answer" to any legal conundrum by searching through the copious materials of written texts and moral principles that constitute the social order. Dworkin has recently compared Hercules to someone writing a "chain novel," an enterprise in which a variety of persons collaborate: one writing the first chapter, sending it on to the second person who writes the next chapter in light of the first, and so on. Dworkin argues that the initiator is quite unconstrained, except perhaps by broad genre definitions (novels, for example, are not conventionally written in rhymed couplets), whereas the successor writers are progressively more constrained. By the time the twelfth or thirteenth chapter must be composed, the author has little choice in defining the plot, the

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central characters, etc., or so Dworkin argues. (He does not argue, though, that the two authors presented with the same materials will necessarily write the same successor chapter, only that they will correctly feel under many of the same constraints.)

So, in a mature legal system, judges are similarly confined. A complex legal system is well into the heart of its textual narrative: whatever individual freedom might have been available to initiating judges is lacking for contemporary judges. They can be expected to search only for the singular solution to problems presented by the earlier chapters of the enterprise.

Fish, however, argues that both the freedom of the initiator and the constraint imposed upon the last author in the chain are equally chimerical. No science of interpretation exists so that an external observer could necessarily predict in advance the reading of the materials that would be given by the author of the last chain. However committed to a "right answer" the last author might be, the interpretive possibilities available would simply make it impossible to state that one and only one reading was open to the conscientious participant in the chain novel project. The thirteenth chapter—or the next case—could thus go off in directions entirely unanticipated by either the authors of the earlier materials or any given reader.

Fish accuses Dworkin of being ultimately committed to the possibility of objective interpretation such that the subjective belief of the judge is in fact also a mirroring of a text unmediated by interpretive bias. Dworkin denies any such commitment: The point of his own approach, he says, is "to describe interpretation rather than to establish the objectivity of interpretive judgments." Indeed, he regards the "whole issue of objectivity, which so dominates contemporary theory . . . [as] a kind of fake." What Dworkin emphasizes is that we are constantly *making* interpretations unless we are catatonic; we are constantly asserting that one way of viewing a problem, whether it is the meaning of a poem or of a constitution, is better than another way. Dworkin does not deny that radically different interpretations may be presented by different persons. The point, though, is to distinguish the activity of *interpretation* from that of sheer *invention,* and Dworkin argues that Fish has no way of doing this. Nor can Fish supply guidance even to distinguish "better" from "worse" interpretations. All interpretations are created equal in Fish's universe, whereas Dworkin believes that he can supply criteria to assess the quality of interpretations, both literary and legal. For

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the former, the test is, what interpretation makes the work the best work of art? For the latter, what interpretation best places conventional legal materials in a "fit" with the most enlightened political theory?

In any case, no part of Dworkin's argument is devoted to classical epistemology and its emphasis on the foundations of belief. One suspects that he might agree with Hilary Putnam's recent critique in *Reason, Truth, and History* of the conventional dichotomies of objective and subjective, fact and value, but he has not explicitly addressed these issues. His project is to help us "account to ourselves for our own convictions as best we can," including the fact that we profess ourselves as "standing ready to abandon those that do not survive reflective inspection." He is thus interested in what counts, in our particular culture, as "reflective inspection."

The debate between Dworkin and Fish thus does not involve whether or not judges *feel* free to impose their own interpretations upon texts. Nor, interestingly enough, is it clear that either Dworkin or Fish really believes that accepting their general theoretical views would actually effect the interpretations that any given individuals would proffer. Fish is especially explicit on this point, emphasizing that "nothing whatsoever" follows from accepting his view for the actual content of a given interpretation. He is interested only in helping us to understand the phenomenology of interpretation and has nothing to teach law professors about *evaluating* interpretations, as he recently emphasized in a paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Schools.

Although Fish and Dworkin have directed angry articles at one another, it is not clear that their disagreements outweigh their much more fundamental agreements both about the task of the analyst—to explain how it is that interpretations arise—and the saturation of any text in varying presuppositions of any given interpreter. Both are thoroughgoing conventionalists, denying that the interpretive enterprise depends at all on resolution of the problems of classical epistemology. Each, ironically, accuses the other of backsliding into statements whose force depends on a view of "reality as it *is*," but it may be the very closeness of their basic positions that accounts for the heat of their exchange. Both are light-years from those theorists who believe that texts are autonomous and capable of being decoded through application of a scientific methodology.

Phenomenological accounts, however, are not really relevant

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to a community that focuses on the cacaphony of answers. The question is how we decide among the different interpretations.

Practically everyone now admits that "texts" can be interpreted only in "contexts." Then the obvious question becomes the ability to "read" contexts. So long as everyone reads a text in the same way, the question is almost entirely of academic interest only. Legal disputes, however, most often arise precisely when there is no such common reading. The easy resolution of conflict by arguing that "everyone knows what X means" is made impossible by the very fact that the litigant does challenge the asserted commonality. In the absence of a belief in judicially cognizable "right answers" derived from techniques of "right reading," are we left with Glazer's description of "arbitrary rule"?

Given these ambiguities of interpretation, many legal theorists have substituted for the hermeneutics of texts what Gerald Graff has recently termed a "hermeneutics of power," where one simply emphasizes the political and social implications of one reading as opposed to another. Indeed, it can even be suggested that the major reason for preferring that reading is the political consequence occasioned by it. Here again the ghostly presence is that of Nietzsche:

> Whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master,* and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous "meaning" and "purpose" are necessarily obscured or even obliterated.

Our Constitution not only enables us to pretend that past linguistic acts can control future action. It also is meant to prevent the rise of Nietzschean "masters." The denial of a genuine alternative to a hermeneutics of power, though, brings in its wake an equal denial of the possibility of doing without such "masters," including those individuals called "judges." The results of judicial inquiry can scarcely be praised as the rule of impersonal law. Instead the judge, like all other interpreters, "simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose," as Richard Rorty, not at all meaning to be condemnatory, put it.

One reads, for example, the assertion in the *Harvard Law*

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Review by Mark Tushnet of the Georgetown Law School that, "in any interesting case any reasonably skilled lawyer [which presumably includes judges] can reach whatever result he or she wants," given the broad array of the interpretive approaches available—"on the wall"—to a member of the contemporary legal community. Probably the most explicit statement of this position, labeled by its detractors "legal nihilism," is that of Harvard Law School's Duncan Kennedy. "Teachers teach nonsense," says Kennedy, "when they persuade students that legal reasoning is distinct, *as a method for achieving correct results,* from ethical and political discourse in general (i.e. from policy analysis) . . . There is never a 'correct legal solution' that is other than the correct ethical and political solution to that legal problem." As Kennedy's own language suggests, it is entirely mistaken to view him as a genuine "nihilist," since he appears to believe in the existence of "correct" ethical values.

Kennedy and Tushnet are two of the scholars identified with the Conference on Critical Legal Studies, one of the most important sources of ferment within contemporary legal debate. Founded in 1977, the Conference is joined together by what Robert Gordon of the Stanford Law School has called "our common disenchantment with liberal legalism." Though there is no canonical definition of "liberal legalism," the term includes reference to that aspect of classical liberal ideology which sought to limit the domination of the powerless by the powerful through the aegis of impersonal law. That law, spelled out in a social contract or constitution, could thereafter constrain judges of varying political persuasions. This is the basis of the distinction between law and politics—and of the independence of the judiciary from political control—which are basic predicates of most liberal political thought.

But, of course, if one accepts the "hermeneutics of power," then there can be no more credible a notion of the "autonomy of law" (or of legal texts) than of the "autonomy of the text" central to the program of the New Critics in literature. Those who purport to defend their activity by saying they are only carrying messages from "within" the legal texts are merely deluding themselves (and possibly attempting to delude others). Instead, they should recognize the reality that they are either in the service of masters—Congress, state legislatures, previous Courts, or whoever—who have bent the materials in order to establish their own domination or instead are *themselves* becoming masters, a new privileged elite presenting a

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presumably better set of political concerns and values to replace those previously dominant.

It is intriguing to note the similarities between a neoconservative such as Glazer and self-professed radicals such as Kennedy and Tushnet. Whatever their vast differences about desirable public policy, both camps join in challenging the claim of judges to be speaking merely as "impersonal messengers"—or peculiarly authoritative interpreters—of textual materials. Both call on their readers to reject the "imperial" claims of judges in favor of some other understandings of the law. Glazer, of course, might oppose the judges by arguing that they have deviated from the "genuine" textual Constitution. Critical legal scholars, however, more influenced by the hermeneutics of indeterminacy, cannot offer similar grounds for their criticisms.

Both the neoconservative and radical critics of the claims made in behalf of contemporary legal doctrines have, of course, been subjected to intense criticism themselves. Owen Fiss of the Yale Law School, for example, has vigorously labeled as "legal nihilism" the views of persons like Tushnet and Kennedy. Indeed, the reader should know that I have also been the brunt of Fiss's attack for an article in the March 1982 *Texas Law Review* entitled "Law as Literature." Building on the views of Fish and Rorty, I concluded:

> It would obviously be nice to believe that *my* Constitution is the true one and therefore, that my opponents' versions are fraudulent, but that is precisely the belief that becomes steadily harder to maintain. They are simply *different* Constitutions. There are as many plausible readings of the United States Constitution as there are versions of *Hamlet,* even though each interpreter, like each director, might genuinely believe that he or she has stumbled onto the one best answer to the conundrums of the texts.

It is no surprise that Fiss views this "nihilism" as a force that "must be combatted and can be, but perhaps only by affirming the truth of that which is being denied—the idea that the Constitution embodies a public morality and that a life founded on that morality can be rich and inspiring." Fiss, very much like Dworkin, views the task of judges as "articulat[ing] and elaborat[ing] the true meaning" of those values found in the constitutional text. Fiss indentifies what he sees at stake in the debate: "[T]his nihilism calls into question the very

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point of constitutional adjudication; it threatens our social existence and the nature of public life as we know it in America; and it demeans our lives."

"Text" to Fiss is a complex term indeed, for he takes great pains to distinguish his position from that "arid and artificial interpretation" which he labels "textual determinism." He links that latter conception with the form of legal positivism that emphasizes the "written constitution" and stresses factors like the use of particular words or the intent or beliefs of the framers, all of which have little or no moral relevance." Part of the reason for Fiss's caveat is his awareness of modern hermeneutical criticisms of such positivism. But Fiss also argues that, even if one granted the theoretical coherence of positivism, the problem remains that "[a] too rigid insistence on positivism will inevitably bring into question the ultimate moral authority of the legal text—the justness of the Constitution." Thus he concedes that an all-too-cognizable Constitution might well be read to have protected slavery, and this fact alone would justify raising the question as to why the Constitution—and beyond that, any legal system—is worthy of respect and obedience. Indeed, the mere presence of such a question indicates "[a] moment of crisis in the life of a constitution."

For Fiss, however, a resolution to any such crisis is available. Judges must be willing "[t]o read the moral as well as the legal text. The judge quickly learns to read in a way that avoids crises." Indeed, Fiss accords the judiciary a "[s]pecial competence to interpret a text such as the Constitution, and to render specific and concrete the public morality embodied in that text." The judiciary is not given a blank check; there need be no fear of the judge's becoming a Nietzschean master. Instead, the judicial interpreter "is disciplined by a set of rules that specify the relevance and weight to be assigned to the material (e.g., words, history, intention, consequence), as well as by those that define basic concepts and that establish the procedural circumstances under which the interpretation must occur."

Fiss, of course, is fully aware that legal adepts argue vigorously among themselves over meanings of the Constitution and of all other textual materials; he does not seriously suggest that lawyers or judges are significantly more likely to agree with one another than are professors of literature debating the meaning of *Hamlet*. He argues, however, that lawyers are different from literary critics by

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having available to them authoritative decision-makers in the persons of courts and judges. The legal system offers procedures that can resolve disputes through, "for example, pronouncements by the highest court. . . . The presence of such procedures and a hierarchy of authority resolving disputes that could potentially divide or destroy an interpretive community is one of the distinctive features of legal interpretation." Ultimately, then, the judge is "a combination of literary critic and moral philosopher. But that is only part of the picture. The judge also speaks with the authority of the Pope."

Fiss writes as a partisan of the post-1954 Supreme Court. Unlike Glazer, he supports its decisions and is appalled by those who counsel disrespect, let alone disobedience. He defends them, though, as exemplary *adjudications* and not simply as desirable political interventions by the judiciary. As Fiss notes, "The idea of adjudication requires that there exist constitutional values to interpret, just as much as it requires that there be constraints on the interpretive process." And for Fiss it is judges who are "in the best position to discover the true meaning of our constitutional values." Without a belief in such judicial competence, says Fiss, "adjudication is not possible, only power." Yet it is precisely the possibility of "truthful adjudication" that is denied by the critical legal scholars.

By now it is clear that interpretive arbitrariness is a deep concern in both the legal and literary communities. And the tone of debate in both is similarly heated. M. H. Abrams has denounced in these pages those "newreaders" who introduce their own idiosyncratic interpretive strategies "when reading someone else's text, but tacitly rely on communal norms when undertaking to communicate the methods and results of [their] interpretations to [their] own readers." Abrams is attacking partisans of indeterminacy who emphasize the lack (or, what may be much the same thing, the overwhelming multiplicity) of communal norms or the inability genuinely to recapture the authorial intent that for both Abrams and E. D. Hirsch is the grounding of the interpretive effort.

Both contemporary legal theory and literary criticism are united by a pervasive anxiety generated by what Professor Mary Robertson of the University of Texas has well described as "the loss of the sense of doing and speaking in the name of someone or something recognizable and unquestionably valid." Without such a socially shared sense, of course, it is difficult to know what it could

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possibly mean to believe that "right answers" had been attained or why one would expect those dissatisfied by the purported answers to obey them.

One possible response to those who share Robertson's lament comes from that tradition of modern philosophy drawn especially from the later Wittgenstein (a much more respectable source than Nietzsche). From this perspective the search for certainty, for undeniable truth, or possibly even for "authoritative interpreters," is itself the main symptom of our collective disorder. Philosophers as different as John Searle, Richard Rorty, and Hilary Putnam have joined in recommending that we simply give up the search in favor of some other conception of philosophy.

Thus Searle, in the course of a review of "deconstructionist" literary theory, argues that much of that theory is motivated by what is a continuing concern about the possibility of establishing foundations for "unquestionably valid" statements. Deconstructionists set up a binary opposition between absolute certainty on one side and chaos (or the "infinite play of signifiers") on the other. "Derrida correctly sees," says Searle, "that there aren't any such foundations, but he then makes the mistake that marks him as a classical metaphysician." That mistake, says Searle "was not the belief that there were metaphysical foundations [for ethics or knowledge], but rather the belief that somehow or other such foundations were necessary, the belief that unless there are foundations something is lost or threatened or undermined or put into question."

Searle flatly denies this. The failure to establish a transcendental grounding for our beliefs "doesn't threaten science, language, or common sense in the least. . . . The only 'foundation,' for example, that language has or needs is that people are biologically, psychologically, and socially constituted so that they succeed in using it to state truths, to give and obey orders, to express their feelings and attitudes, to thank, apologize, warn, congratulate, etc." And presumably, this series could be extended to include "issue judicial opinions" as well.

This philosophical stance is reflected in the recent book *Constitutional Fate* (Oxford University Press, 1982) by Philip Bobbitt, my colleague at the University of Texas Law School. He draws explicitly on Wittgenstein to criticize those constitutional theorists who seek an underlying foundation for judicial review. Instead, he treats

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judicial review (and interpretation) as a constitutive practice of our community, and the brunt of his book is an examination of the various conventions of interpretation open to members of the interpretive community. He delineates the various ways we do, in fact, conduct constitutional argumentation without searching beyond those accounts for some kind of additional legitimation.

One of the central metaphors in Richard Rorty's account of our intellectual lives is that of the "conversation," which he wishes to contrast with "argument," at least where the latter refers to the search for final intellectual solutions. Bobbitt, too, presents a similarly attractive account of our "constitutional fate," where we are all engaged in a collective conversation about the meanings we shall give our purported foundation document.

Yet a principal social reality of law is its coercive force. The disruptions that can be generated by a legal decision are not conversations, any more than a Maoist revolution is a tea party. Or, at least, they are not conversations from which one can gracefully exit. As Holmes emphasized, courts, and the law in whose name they profess to speak ultimately incarnate not reason—or even civility—but the coercive force of the state. One aspect of our contemporary crisis is precisely an increased perception of law as simply the collision of competing ideologies, none able to ground its claims in a way satisfactory to those who feel victimized.

The "turn toward interpretation" has thus led to what might be described as a plethora of interpretations, with none establishing itself so solidly within the professional community as to constitute a paradigm. Each interpreter seems especially skilled in criticizing others; the moves by which one undermines (or deconstructs) one's opponents are increasingly well known. Only a brave few present even themselves as speaking in the name of "something recognizable and unquestionably valid," so deep is our modernist awareness of the importance of perspective, convention, and ideology. The "conversation" continues, albeit with increasingly Pinteresque silences, mumbles, incomprehension, and ill will.

Political theory and jurisprudence have always been intertwined with wider developments within the culture. Instabilities of interpretation that initially may plague only the teacher of poetry or the anthropologist come to plague the legal interpreter as well. The only difference is that the consequences of the latter cannot be

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blandly dismissed as "academic," for the legitimacy of the political order is ultimately at stake. The debates throughout the land about legal hermeneutics are part of the wider debate by which we examine the relevance of our structures of meanings and of governance to the dilemmas of America and the world in the 1980s.

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Hilary Putnam

AFTER AYER, AFTER EMPIRICISM

If any problem has emerged as *the* problem for analytic philosophy in the twentieth century, it is the problem of how words "hook onto" the world. The difficulty with A. J. Ayer, who has tried, in his recent book, to sum up philosophy in the twentieth century is that there is no acknowledgement of the difficulty of this problem.

A. J. Ayer's *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* is pleasant and useful reading in its first half. One encounters William James, C. I. Lewis, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, and such lesser Oxford figures as W. D. Ross and H. A. Pritchard, presented as they struck Ayer in his youth or as they influenced his philosophical life and not just as he now regards them (although he tells us that as well). Ayer's description of the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* is likewise pleasant and useful to read. But beginning with the section on the later Wittgenstein the book becomes, for the most part, disappointing.

It is obvious that something happened in philosophy after the *Tractatus* with which Ayer is profoundly out of sympathy. And while he tries to present what happened conscientiously—and he is certainly fair-minded—he curiously fails to tell the reader *what* it is that he is unable to sympathize with: perhaps he does not know himself. The result is that a reader who had only this book to go by would have to see philosophy after the early Wittgenstein as, for the most part, a series of empty and confused ideas and arguments. Even the exposition becomes untrustworthy. My own views (with which Ayer concludes) are misrepresented (I do not hold that it is inconceivable that one could discover that water is not H_2O) as are, for example, those of David Armstrong, the representative of contemporary materialism that Ayer chooses. Ayer charges Armstrong with denying the existence of "appearances," i.e., sense data. But Armstrong is quite clear on this point: he believes in the existence of appearances, but he does not take appearance-*concepts* as primitive and unanalyzable. Rather he regards appearances as functionally characterized brain-events.

If the book only half succeeds in its aim to be a sequel to Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy,* it succeeds better in giving a picture of Ayer as a philosopher. From the time he first appeared on the

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scene as *the* British exponent of logical positivism to the present moment, Sir Alfred Jules Ayer has been somewhat of a paradox—always against the fashion, always rebellious, yet, also (and in a good sense) old-fashioned in his philosophical demeanor. While his views have changed considerably since he wrote *Language, Truth and Logic,* he continues to philosophize in the style and spirit of Bertrand Russell. If that style and spirit no longer speak to the concerns of practicing philosophers, that is, I suspect, a fact of cultural importance and not just an event for professional philosophers to note.

On the one hand, Ayer still bases his philosophy—he remains an empiricist—on sense data, which he now prefers to call "sense-qualia." He answers Wittgenstein's famous doubts about the possibility of accounting for public language and public knowledge in terms of supposedly private objects, by postulating a faculty he calls "primary recognition" which enables us to "straightforwardly identify" sense-qualia when they occur. Wittgenstein's treatment of scepticism about our ability to know other minds is seen as a "summary dismissal," rather than (as more appreciative readers of Wittgenstein would see it) as something which cannot be understood apart from the whole structure of Wittgenstein's philosophical work—which would make it just the opposite of "summary."

On the other hand, Ayer no longer holds to the positivist view that unverifiable statements are meaningless. (Statements about the distant past may be unverifiable, but according to Ayer, they are certainly meaningful.) Ayer has long since given up his former view that material objects are just a sort of logical fiction which we introduce to systematize our talk about sense-qualia. Like Russell in his later writings, Ayer now thinks that material objects are real things whose existence we are justified in inferring from the behavior of our sense-qualia.

There is even a hint—perhaps much more than a hint—of mind-body dualism in Ayer's current view. Ayer doubts that the statement that a sense-quale is "identical" with a brain-event is *intelligible;* and he further doubts that the evidence for a one-to-one correlation of sense-qualia and (some class of) brain-events, is more than fragmentary. He avoids having to say that human bodily motions are exceptions to the laws of physics or that human wishes and desires are epiphenomenal by postulating that some physical events —bodily behaviors—can have more than one causal explanation. The motion of my arm can be causally explained by events in my

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nervous system, but since it can also be causally explained by my wish to hand someone an ashtray, there is no question of this wish being something which I feel before the arm moves, but which does not "really" cause the arm to move.

I have indicated that practicing philosophers today feel a strong sense of *deja vu* when they read this sort of thing. Ayer will reply that he is quite aware that his views are "out of fashion." But is a change of fashion really all that is in question? A change of fashion is certainly part of what is involved. As Ayer remarks, materialism is again in vogue, at least in American and Australian philosophy, and "sense-qualia" are out of vogue. But more is also involved. What analytic philosophers of almost any persuasion will regard as strange is that Ayer ignores an enormous amount of discussion of the issue of recognition of sense-qualia. Ayer has, so to speak, no interest in cognitive psychology. But a cognitive psychology of some sort—a theory of the mind—is what is needed to back his talk of "primary recognition." Thus, the possibility of misinterpreting one's sense-data is mentioned only in passing (they are qualitatively the same even if one misinterprets them, according to Ayer, who agrees with C. I. Lewis on this point). There are no entries under "corrigibility," "incorrigibility," or "privileged access" in the index, although these are notions around which discussion has centered for the last forty years.

To see why this ought to be a problem for Ayer, let us recall that Ayer follows Hume in regarding causal statements as just a special class of regularity statements. Certain sorts of regularities may be especially important and useful, and we may call them "causal" for that reason, but this should not mislead us, Ayer argues, into believing that the event we call the "cause" somehow *necessitates* the events we call the "effect." This is why Ayer can think that two such different events (in his view) as an electrochemical event in my brain and a desire to hand someone an ashtray can both cause the motion of my arm; why shouldn't the regularity statements, "When I wish to hand someone an ashtray my arm moves in such-and-such a way" and "When such-and-such an electrochemical event takes place in my brain my arm moves in such-and-such a way" both be true? ("How can two different events *both* bring about the motion of my arm?" is only a confused question on the Hume-Ayer view.)

Imagine now that someone misinterprets a sense-quale on a particular occasion. I myself once referred to a sweater as "blue"

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several times before someone pointed out that it was green. And it *was* green—it didn't even *look* blue; it's just that I persisted in calling it blue. I didn't even notice that I was using "blue" for green (or whatever was really going on) until another person corrected me. According to Ayer such events don't matter; I still "recognized" the quale *green* even if I referred to it as "blue." What is this act of "primary recognition" that connects my mind to a universal?

According to Berkeley and Hume I do not have such a thing as an "abstract idea" or a "general idea" of green. When a particular token—be it a green color patch or a token of the word "green"—occurs in my mind, and is used as a symbol for the whole class of green sense data, all that happens is that the token is associated with a certain class of other tokens to which it is similar or which are similar to one another. Ayer and Russell depart from Berkeley and Hume on this point—and with good reason. For they see that if I can think of a *particular* relation of "similarity," then I am able to recognize at least one universal. Thus universals cannot really be avoided in the way Berkeley and Hume wanted to do.

But a naturalistic theory of the mind must try to analyze "primary recognition" into something scientifically more intelligible—say, into straightforward causal processes. Here is where the trouble starts.

If a class A of events is highly statistically correlated with another class B of events (with, say, a correlation coefficient of .97), then any class A′ of events which has almost the same members as A will also be correlated very highly with B. Thus there is no such thing as *the* class A of events with which a given class B is correlated. If the relation between occurrences of a sign, say the words "green sense-datum," and events (occurrences of a green patch in my visual field) were merely statistical correlation, then those words would be correlated with many different—at least slightly different—classes of events. There would be no such thing as *the* class of events associated with "green sense-datum," and no basis for saying that a particular event (imagine I utter the words "green sense-datum" when the sense-datum is really blue, and I fail to notice the slip) wasn't *really* associated with the words.

If one believes in non-Humean causation, then one can get around the problem by saying that the "right" class of events A is the class of events which exhibits whatever property objectively *brings about* utterances of the form "this is a green sense datum" in the stan-

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dard cases. Other classes A′ may have a high statistical correlation with the occurrence of an utterance of this type, but that is irrelevant if the correlation is not truly causal.

But in the empiricist view, events don't have objective, perspective-independent "bringers-about." "Bringing about" is something we read into the world. "Bringing about" cannot be appealed to in explaining the nature of "primary recognition." On the other hand, mere statistical association is too weak a connection. The only remaining alternative is the one Russell and Ayer choose—to assume, or simply posit, a primitive, totally unanalyzed act of "primary recognition" which connects a sign directly to tokens that are not present to the mind performing the act (or, what comes to the same thing, connects the mind directly to one and only one "quality" of a token which is before it). This act of "primary recognition" is simply a mystery act, an occult sort of performance which establishes an intensional link between certain particulars and certain universals.

Perhaps it is no more of a mystery than Descartes' God, or Aristotle's prime mover (one needs *some* Archimedian point to avoid infinite regress, Ayer might claim), but a mystery nonetheless. For it has long been central to naturalistic psychology that the mind can interact with universals only through causal transactions involving instances of those universals, transactions which it is the business of psychology to analyze into elementary processes of a sort compatible with our scientific image of the world. But Ayer has no theory of the mind at all, nor is it clear that he has the building materials out of which such a theory—a theory of an organ with such capabilities as "primary recognition"—might be constructed. Is the mind supposed to be a collection of sense-qualia (as Hume thought)? Can a collection of sense-qualia engage in acts of primary recognition of universals? Ayer gives us nothing but matter and sense-qualia, and neither seems the sort of stuff that can perform such acts. It is strange that an empiricist and former positivist would feel so untroubled by the need to postulate a mysterious mental act.

Now that Ayer has become a realist about material objects, other problems occur which he does not notice, as well. The existence of material objects cannot really be a hypothesis which explains my sense-qualia, as Ayer thinks, unless I can *understand* this hypothesis. To explain how I can understand it I must solve the problem which so troubled Berkeley and Hume—I must succeed in somehow establishing a correspondence between the sign "material

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object," and something which is *not* a "sense-quale." Clearly, no act of "primary recognition" will help me here. Formerly Ayer would have been able to say that "material object" only stands for a set of logical constructions out of sense-qualia anyway; now that he has given up his positivism, he does not have this way out. Unfortunately, he does not appear to recognize the problem.

What is strange about this is that it was Russell (and the early Wittgenstein) who put this problem in the center of attention. Russell's theory of material objects as a species of logical construction was part of a comprehensive attempt to speak to this very problem. The distinction between what one can "say" and what one can only "show" in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was an attempt to dissolve this problem by removing it to the realm of the ineffable. Ayer describes Russell's effort with loving care. But, after pointing out the many difficulties with Russell's solution, he simply opts for the idea that the existence of material objects is a causal hypothesis, without noticing that this idea speaks to a different problem altogether.

It is because Ayer has changed problems altogether that he now stresses the idea that philosophy is "theory of evidence." If the problem is *what is the evidence* that there is an external world in the causal realist's sense, a world of mind-independent and discourse-independent objects, and not *how can language or thought connect with what is outside the mind,* then we are, indeed, in the province of "theory of evidence" (if there is such a thing). But, as Russell and Wittgenstein saw, the latter problem is prior to the former. It looks as if, to solve the latter problem, one must either deny that material objects are "outside the mind" (perhaps by constructing both the "mind" and "material objects" out of something "neutral," which was another of Russell's ideas) or postulate a mysterious relation of "correspondence" between what is in the mind and what is outside. If you say, as Ayer in effect does, "Russell was wrong to treat material objects as logical constructions, so I will treat them as inferred entities," you ignore, rather than solve, the problem which made Russell *want* to treat them as logical constructions.

A way out, which Ayer ascribes to C. I. Lewis, is to say that the "criterion for the reality of an object is the confirmation of the hypothesis in which this reality is explicitly or implicitly affirmed." But, Ayer seems to be unwilling to go this far, although this is the sort of answer he himself gave in *Language, Truth and Logic.* In any case, this answer, coupled with the claim that the "evidence" for the

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existence of material objects consists entirely of sense-qualia, amounts to the claim that all talk about material objects is just highly indirect talk about sense-qualia. This is the worldview of Berkelian idealism, pure and simple.

But why should a theory which only a few philosophers have ever believed, the theory that the only objects whose existence is not of a highly derived kind are sense-qualia—that sense-qualia are the furniture of the universe—be more credible than the worldview of science and common sense?

In sum, Ayer lands himself in the following predicament: either he must return to subjective idealism or he must face the problem which has always been the nemesis of causal realism, the problem of the nature of the link between language and the world. (Even the nature of the link between language and sense data not immediately present to the mind is a problem for Ayer's view. Postulating an act of "primary recognition" is not providing an analysis of this link at all.)

The materialists to whom Ayer refers have a view on these matters, but it is not mentioned in this book. (Only their view on the mind-body problem is discussed, and that view is misrepresented, as I mentioned.) The contemporary materialist view, for what it is worth, is that the correspondence between signs and their objects is established by "causal connection." The difficulty mentioned before —that there are too many regularities and too many statistical tendencies for reference to be a matter of just regularities and/or statistical tendencies—is met by postulating that causality is more than a matter of regularities and statistical tendencies. Hume was just wrong; there are real "causal powers," real "abilities to produce" in the world, and these notions, these philosophers say, must be taken as primitive.

This view raises many problems, however, which I am sure Ayer would have pointed out had this issue been one he discussed. For one thing, the worldview of materialism is taken from fundamental physics—ignoring, however, the pervasive relativity of the state of a physical system to an "observer" which is characteristic of modern quantum mechanics. Materialists think of the whole universe as a "closed" system, described as God might describe it if He were allowed to know about it clairvoyantly, but not allowed to interfere with it. The states of the closed system succeed one another; which state will follow which is determined by a system of

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equations, the Equations of Motion of the system. The claim that the states don't merely follow one another (as prescribed by the Equations of Motion), but actually "produce" the states which follow them, introduces an element which physicists have long rejected as a metaphysical addition to the content of physics itself.

Even if one is not bothered by this (or thinks that the physicists have been too influenced by empiricism), a relation of "producing" which applies only to "states" of closed systems will hardly clarify the meaning of "causes" as in "John's wild gesture caused the vase to fall off the mantlepiece." To explain the idea that John's gesture "produced" the falling of the vase without going back to the Hume-Ayer account (causality as regularities plus statistical tendencies), some materialists bring in such recherché objects as possible worlds and a relation of "nearness" between possible worlds (a genuine causal regularity is supposed to hold not only in the actual world but in non-actual worlds "near" to the actual world), while others just take the idea that some events "explain" other events as primitive.

The fact is that the God's Eye View of the Universe as One Closed System—the metaphysical picture on which materialism is based—has no real room for "abilities to produce," a primitive relation of causation-as-explanation, or nearness-of-possible-worlds. This currently fashionable metaphysical talk is as incoherent from a consistent materialist view as it is from an empiricist view. On the other hand, the world of ordinary life—what Husserl called the "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*)—is full of objects which "produce effects" in other objects, of events which "explain" other events, of people who "recognize" things (and not only sense-qualia).

When the materialists get in trouble, what they do is forget their metaphysical picture and simply borrow whatever notions they need from the *Lebenswelt,* i.e., from spontaneous phenomenology. (That they then dress up these notions from spontaneous phenomenology in a language which comes from medieval philosophy is a curious aberration.) But the whole point of having a metaphysical picture—a picture of the furniture of the universe—was to analyze the notions of our spontaneous phenomenology. Just as Ayer ignores the fact that there is nothing in what he gives us to start with—Humean sense impressions under the new name "sense-qualia"—to give us minds (let alone an act of "primary recognition" to put those minds in direct contact with universals), so the materialists ignore the fact that there is nothing in what they give us to start with—the

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closed system, its "states," and the Equations of Motion—to give us "abilities to produce"; let alone a relation of "correspondence" between signs and objects.

In a way, Ayer's problem comes from Hume's project of analyzing causal talk into two parts: one part (the regularities) which is "objective," and one (the "necessity") which is nothing but a human projection (even if such projections are indispensable in practice). Both Ayer and the materialists are trying to carry out Hume's project of telling us what "really exists" (sense-qualia and their relations, in Ayer's view, until material objects got added on as a "causal hypothesis"; the closed system and its "states" in the materialist view), and what is only a "human projection." I want to suggest, as I think the later Wittgenstein was suggesting, that this project is now a total shambles. Analytic philosophy has great accomplishments, to be sure; but those accomplishments are negative. Like logical positivism (itself just one species of analytic philosophy), analytic philosophy has succeeded in destroying the very problem with which it started. Each of the efforts to solve that problem, or even to say exactly what could *count* as a solution to that problem, has failed.

This "deconstruction" is no mean intellectual accomplishment. We have learned an enormous amount about our concepts and our lives by seeing that the grand projects of discovering the furniture of the universe have all failed. But analytic philosophy pretends today not to be just one great movement in the history of philosophy—which it certainly was—but to be philosophy itself. This self-description *forces* analytic philosophers (even if they reject Ayer's particular views) to keep coming up with new "solutions" to the problem of the Furniture of the Universe—solutions which become more and more bizarre, and which have lost all interest outside of the philosophical community. Thus we have a paradox: at the very moment when analytical philosophy is recognized as the "dominant movement" in world philosophy, analytical philosophy has come to the end of its own project—the dead end, not the completion.

I want to suggest that there is another way of reading the history of philosophy in the twentieth century. In Ayer's reading, it all went somehow beserk after philosophers stopped talking about sense data and about how sense data are the "evidence" for everything we know. (Ayer professes to be optimistic, but on his description of the scene it is impossible to see why one should be.) I suggest that two things have happened. The first, which the first half

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of Ayer's book describes, consisted of a series of heroic attempts to solve the problems of traditional metaphysics. These attempts by Frege, Russell, Carnap, and the early Wittgenstein were called "attacks on metaphysics," but in fact they were among the most ingenious, profound, and technically brilliant constructions of metaphysical systems ever achieved. Even if they failed, modern symbolic logic, a good deal of modern language theory, and a part of contemporary cognitive science were all offshoots of these attempts.

The second thing that happened is almost unrecognized, even today. Beginning in the last decade of the nineteenth century, certain philosophers began to reject Hume's project—not just Hume's project with respect to causation, but the entire enterprise of dividing mundane "reality" into the Furniture of the World and our "projections." These philosophers have in common a rejection—a root-and-branch rejection—of the enterprise mentioned, and a concern with the quotidian, with the *Lebenswelt,* with what a philosophy free of the search for a 'true world' (Nietzsche's phrase!) might look like. I myself see Husserl as such a philosopher (Ayer's treatment of Merleau-Ponty, whom he chooses as his representative of phenomenology, is rendered worthless by Ayer's failure to understand that Merleau-Ponty rejects Ayer's entire problematique.) Wittgenstein and Austin were such philosophers. Nelson Goodman is such a philosopher. Ayer does treat this last figure with a proper respect, but even here he cannot see quite *why* Goodman wants to be such a relativist —because Ayer has not seen the emptiness of his own resolution of the words-world problem.

The beginning of a philosophical movement which does not seek to divide our *Lebenswelt* into furniture and projections may itself only be a fashion, to be sure. But if it is the direction philosophical thought is going to take—and I rather hope that it is, because the old project deserves at least a respite, if not a permanent burial—then this is bound to effect the way in which the culture generally views almost all questions of general intellectual procedure. Much of our discussion—the discussion whether values are "objective" or "subjective" for example—is still trapped in the categories fixed by Hume. Stanley Cavell has recently suggested that a less distanced attitude towards the life-world (the only world we have, after all), may be a matter of some lasting moral importance. (He connects this with a way of reading Emerson and Thoreau.) Nelson Goodman has suggested that a rejection of the question "is it the world itself or is it

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only a version?" may free us from "flat footed philosophy." He is not suggesting, as I understand it, that philosophers construct "worlds of worlds" irresponsibly; but he is suggesting that a recognition that philosophy is construction and not description of things-in-themselves, is compatible with recognizing that the philosopher is responsible to evolving requirements of objectivity—requirements of "fit" with respect to his subject matter, and with respect to the self that he is both constructing and expressing.

What Ayer's book lacks is any sense of the way in which philosophy (like the arts) has become agonized, tormented by the weight of its past, burdened by predecessors whom it cannot escape. His tone is progressive throughout. But the fact that the key moves in Ayer's philosophy—postulating a primitive act of "primary recognition," and reviving causal realism (or more accurately, equivocating between causal realism and subjective idealism) were in vogue before Kant even started to write the first *Critique*—explodes this particular conception of "progress." The authors that Ayer discusses in the second half of his book have almost all, in one way or another, undermined these moves. If few of these authors ever comes quite into focus, it is because he has to fit their work into his own picture of philosophical "progress." And he cannot, for they are all in another world.

We are saddened by the death of JAMES ERNST.

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Nelson Goodman

NOTES ON THE WELL-MADE WORLD

Since it seems obvious that words are usually different from what they refer to, that we cannot in general make anything by merely describing or picturing it, and that not all descriptions or pictures are right, how can I talk of worldmaking, find facts fluid, acknowledge conflicting truths, and suggest that the distinction between world and version is elusive? Here I want to review and clarify some themes of *Ways of Worldmaking,* discuss some common objections to it, and reaffirm some of its paradoxes.

Monism, Pluralism, Nihilism

Some truths conflict. The earth stands still, revolves about the sun, and runs many another course all at the same time. Yet nothing moves while at rest. We flinch at recognition of conflicting truths; for since all statements follow from a contradiction, acceptance of a statement and its negate erases the difference between truth and falsity.

Usually we seek refuge in simple-minded relativization: according to a geocentric system the earth stands still, while according to a heliocentric system it moves. But there is no solid comfort here. Merely that a given version says something does not make what it says true; after all, some versions say the earth is flat or that it rests on the back of a tortoise. That the earth is at rest according to one system and moves according to another says nothing about how the earth behaves but only something about what these versions say. What must be added is that these versions are true. But then the contradiction reappears, and our escape is blocked.

Should we rather consider "The earth is at rest" and "The earth moves" as incomplete fragments of statements, true or false only

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when completed in some such way as in "The earth moves relative to the sun" or "The earth is at rest relative to Mount Everest"? This does not work either; for what can these statements mean? Perhaps, in the former case, "If the sun is at rest, then the earth moves". But then the antecedent and consequent are themselves fragments of statements, without truth-value until completed; and so on ad infinitum. Or should we translate to "If the sun's position is plotted as a point, the earth's positions will be plotted as a path"? Then, since the diagrams are simply (nonverbal) versions, we are back to simple-minded relativization.

How, then, are we to accommodate conflicting truths without sacrificing the difference between truth and falsity? Perhaps by treating these versions as true in different worlds. Versions not applying in the same world no longer conflict; contradiction is avoided by segregation. A true version is true in some worlds, a false version in none. Thus the multiple worlds of conflicting true versions are actual worlds, not the merely possible worlds or nonworlds of false versions.

So if there is any actual world, there are many. For there are conflicting true versions and they cannot be true in the same world. If the notion of a multiplicity of actual worlds is odd and unpalatable, we nevertheless seem forced to it by the intolerable alternative of a world in which contradictory and therefore all versions are true.

But where are these many actual worlds? How are they related to one another? Are there many earths all going along different routes at the same time and risking collision? Of course not; in any world there is only one Earth; and the several worlds are not distributed in any space-time. Space-time is an ordering within a world; the space-times of different worlds are not embraced within some greater space-time. Worlds are distinguished by the conflict or irreconcilability of their versions; and any ordering among them is other than spatio-temporal.

Yet however intricately and plausibly this idea may be developed, how can there really be many worlds? There may be many stars, many planets, many chairs, many things, many events; and truths about them may conflict and contrast in all sorts of ways. But "world" is all-inclusive, covers all there is. A world is a totality; there can be no multiplicity of totalities, no more than one all-

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inclusive whole. By assigning conflicting versions to different worlds, we preclude composition of these totalities into one. Whatever we may mean by saying that the motion of the Earth, or of different earths, differs in different worlds, we rule out any more comprehensive whole comprised of these. For a totality cannot be partial; a world cannot be a piece of something bigger.

So if there is any world, there are many, and if many, none. And if none, what becomes of truth and the relationship of a version to what it describes? Parmenides ran into this trouble long ago; because truths conflict, we cannot describe the world. Even when he said "It is" he went too far. "It is" gives way to "They are"; and "They are" to "None is". Monism, pluralism, nihilism coalesce.

Part of the trouble comes, as in the Kantian antinomies, from stretching some terms or notions beyond their reach. So long as we keep within a version, "world" or "totality" is clear enough, but when we consider conflicting true versions and their several worlds, paradox enters. This sometimes leads to utter resignation, sometimes to an irresponsible relativism that takes all statements as equally true. Neither attitude is very productive. More serviceable is a policy common in daily life and impressively endorsed by modern science: namely, judicious vacillation. After all, we shift point of view and frame of reference for motion frequently from sun to earth to train to plane, and so on. The physicist flits back and forth between a world of waves and a world of particles as suits his purpose. We usually think and work within one world-version at a time—hence Hilary Putnam's term "internal realism"[1]—but we shift from one to another often. When we undertake to relate different versions, we introduce multiple worlds. When that becomes awkward, we drop the worlds for the time being and consider only the versions. We are monists, pluralists, or nihilists not quite as the wind blows but as befits the context.

According to one variety of solipsism, only I exist but this holds for each of the many people in the world. Somewhat analogously, one might say that there is only one world but this holds for each of the many worlds. In both cases the equivocation is stark—yet perhaps negotiable.

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1. See, for example, his *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 123–140.

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Ontology Evanescent

Or have we gone too far too fast? May the conflicts we encounter among truths turn out on closer examination to amount less to genuine differences in what is said than to differences in manner of saying? Rather than disagreements on objective fact, are these merely superficial differences, chargeable to the varying perspectives and languages of our versions, with the real world to be sought beneath such surface disturbances?

Consider again, for example, the true statements that the earth is at rest, that it revolves around the sun, that it dances a jig, and so on. The suggestion is that the conflicts between these have no more *to do with the earth, sun, or other heavenly bodies than do the* different orders in which these objects may be described, but arise from the differing biases of the several versions; and that statements concerning the direction, speed, and acceleration of motion are different ways of describing the neutral facts of variation in distance between objects at different times. If all features responsible for disagreements among versions are thus dismissed as artificial, truths will no longer conflict in a way that calls for different worlds.

But once we recognize that some supposed features of the world derive from—are made and imposed by—versions, 'the world' rapidly evaporates. For there is no version-independent feature, no true version compatible with all true versions. Our so-called neutral version of motion is as prejudiced as any other; for if direction and speed and acceleration are relative to observer and frame of reference, so also is distance between objects. And, as I shall argue below, the objects themselves and the time and space they occupy are version-dependent. No organization into units is unique or mandatory, nor is there any featureless raw material underlying different organizations. Any raw stuff is as much the creature of a version as is what is made out of that stuff.

Yet if all features of a world are creatures of a version, are generated and imposed by the version, what can they be imposed upon? The question is pertinent but slightly awry. The world of a true version is a construct; the features are not conferred upon something independent of the version but combined with one another to make the world of that version. The world is not the version itself; the version may have features—such as being in English or consisting of words—that its world does not. But the world depends upon the version.

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Some inkling of what I mean by saying we make worlds may begin to glimmer here; we make versions, and true versions make worlds. This calls for further explanation on more than one score. How can we be said to make worlds by making versions, when making a true description of a chair, for example, falls far short of making a chair? And while we make versions, and we hope some true versions, we can hardly make versions true. Moreover, if there is no independent world to match a version against, what constitutes truth and what are the tests for it?

How to Make Things with Words[2]

That we can make the stars dance, as Galileo and Bruno made the earth move and the sun stop, not by physical force but by verbal invention, is plain enough. That we by like means also make things what they are in respects other than motion has now begun to be clear. From here a short step leads to the conclusion that we make the things themselves. But that, on the face of it, seems silly. Downright refutations are ready at hand in the form of challenges to produce forthwith, by means of a potent description, an extra planet, a chair to sit in, or a tender beefsteak. Inevitable failure is taken to prove the point.

But I have not said that we can make a steak or a chair or a world at will and as we like by making a version. Only if true does description make things; and making a true version can be hard work. But isn't that begging the question? Doesn't that amount to saying that versions can make only what is already there? And how can that properly be said to be making at all? If versions can make neither what is nor what is not already there, that seems a closed case against their making anything at all.

Yet I am not ready to give up; 'being already there' needs further examination, and finding what is already there may turn out to be very much a matter of making.

I sit in a cluttered waiting room, unaware of any stereo system. Gradually I make out two speakers built into the bookcase, a

2. With apologies to J. L. Austin, who did not explicitly include making things in what we do with words.

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receiver and turntable in a corner cabinet, and a remote control switch on the mantel. I find a system that was already there. But see what this finding involves: distinguishing the several components from the surroundings, categorizing them by function, and uniting them into a single whole. A good deal of making, with complex conceptual equipment, has gone into finding what is already there. Another visitor, fresh from a lifetime in the deepest jungle, will not find, because he has not the means of making, any stereo system in that room. Nor will he find books there; but in the books and plants I find he may find fuel and food that I do not. Not only does he not know that the stereo set is one; he does not recognize as a thing at all that which I know to be a stereo system—that is, he does not make out or make any such object.

Now you may complain that all I am doing is applying a different term to a familiar process to bring out the constructive aspect of cognition. And you may ask, as Israel Scheffler has, how we can reasonably say that we, or versions, make the stars, which existed long before us and all versions.[3] Let me defer that question for a moment to look at a slightly different case.

Has a constellation been there as long as the stars that compose it, or did it come into being only when selected and designated? In the latter case, the constellation was created by a version. And what could be meant by saying that the constellation was always there, before any version? Does this mean that all configurations of stars whatever are always constellations whether or not picked out and designated as such? I suggest that to say that all configurations are constellations is in effect to say that none are: that a constellation becomes such only through being chosen from among all configurations, much as a class becomes a kind[4] only through being distinguished, according to some principle, from other classes.

Now as we thus make constellations by picking out and putting together certain stars rather than others, so we make stars by drawing certain boundaries rather than others. Nothing dictates whether the skies shall be marked off into constellations or other objects. We

3. See his "The Wonderful Worlds of Goodman", *Synthese* 45 (1980) 201–209, and my reply, pp. 211–215.

4. That is, a *relevant*—sometimes miscalled *natural*—kind.

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have to make what we find, be it the Great Dipper, Sirius, food, fuel, or a stereo system.[5]

Still, if stars like constellations are made by versions, how can the stars have been there eons before all versions? Plainly, through being made by a version that puts the stars much earlier than itself in its own space-time. As the physicist J. R. Wheeler writes:

> The universe does not exist "out there" independent of us. We are inescapably involved in bringing about that which appears to be happening. We are not only observers. We are participators . . . in making [the] past as well as the present and the future.[6]

Truthmaking

Yet our making by means of versions is subject to severe constraints; and if nothing stands apart from all versions, what can be the basis and nature of these constraints? How can a version be wrong about a world it makes? We must obviously look for truth not in the relation of a version to something outside that it refers to but in characteristics of the version itself and its relationships to other versions. Could a version perhaps be false somewhat in the way a jigsaw puzzle can be wrongly put together, or a motor fail to run, a poster to attract attention, or a camouflage to conceal?

When the world is lost and correspondence along with it, the first thought is usually coherence. But the answer cannot lie in coherence alone; for a false or otherwise wrong version can hold together as well as a right one. Nor do we have any self-evident truths, absolute axioms, unlimited warranties, to serve as touchstones in distinguishing right from among coherent versions; other considerations must enter into that choice. Let us begin by looking

5. And this, as I have mentioned earlier, goes all the way down. Not all differences between true versions can be thought of as differences in grouping or marking off within something common to all. For there are no absolute elements, no space-time or other stuff common to all, no entity that is under all guises or under none.

6. In *Science 81* (June) p. 67.

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at some of these that have to do with varieties of rightness other than truth.

Validity of inductive inference, though a property of a relation among statements, requires truth neither of premises nor of conclusion; a valid inductive argument may even yield a false conclusion from true premises. What, then, is required for inductive validity? Certain formal relationships among the sentences in question *plus* what I shall call right categorization. Now a category or system of categories—a way of sorting—is not sentential, is not true or false; but use of wrong categories will make an induction invalid no matter how true the conclusion. For example, if an emerald is said to be grue just in case it is either examined before a given time and determined to be green or is not so examined and is blue, then the same formal rules that lead from evidence statements about green emeralds to the hypothesis "All emeralds are green" will also lead from evidence-statements about "grue emeralds" to the hypothesis "All emeralds are grue"; but the former inference is valid, the latter not. For although the evidence-statements are true in both cases, and the truth of both hypotheses is as yet undetermined, "grue" picks out a category wrong in this context, a nonrelevant kind. Valid induction runs within—is constrained by—right categories; and only through distinguishing right categories from among classes in general can we distinguish valid from invalid induction. But what makes a category right? Very briefly, and oversimply, its adoption in inductive practice, its entrenchment, resulting from inertia modified by invention.[7] Why some categories rather than others have become entrenched—a subject of avid philosophical debate—does not matter here; the entrenchment, however achieved, provides the required distinction. Rightness of categorization, in my view, derives from rather than underlies entrenchment.

Inductive validity is not only an example of rightness other than truth but is also one of the criteria applied in the search for truth: a hypothesis validly inferred is favored over an alternative invalidly inferred from the same evidence. Yet how is acceptability as determined by such considerations related to truth, and does this

7. The matter is more complex than can be made clear here. Some outlines are offered in my book *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast,* IV.

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help us answer the question what constitutes truth? Obviously we cannot equate truth with acceptability; for we take truth to be constant while acceptability is transient. Even what is maximally acceptable at one moment may become inacceptable later. But *ultimate* acceptability — acceptability that is not subsequently lost — is of course as steadfast as truth. Such ultimate acceptability, although we may seldom if ever know when or whether it has been or will be achieved, serves as a sufficient condition for truth[8]. And since acceptability involves inductive validity, which involves right categorization, which involves entrenchment, habit must be recognized as an integral ingredient of truth. Though that may give pause, it follows as the day the night. For if we make worlds, the meaning of truth lies not in these worlds but in ourselves — or better, in our versions and what we do with them.

So far, for simplicity, I have been speaking as if all versions consisted of statements, but actually many versions are in symbols of other kinds and in nonverbal media. Since any version may be right or wrong, though only statements are true or false, truth as rightness of what is said is a narrow species of rightness. Moreover, it is a species of but one aspect of rightness; for symbols, verbal or not, may refer not only by denotation but by exemplification or expression or by complex chains made up of homogeneous or heterogeneous referential steps, or in two or more of these ways. And a version may be right or wrong in any of these respects. A nonrepresentational painting, for instance, may exemplify certain forms and patterns, may show a way of seeing that is tested in further seeing somewhat as a proposed hypothesis is tested in further cases. The painting does not say anything, cannot be true or false, yet may be right or wrong. I cannot go into all this here, but I am convinced that philosophy must take into account all the ways and means of worldmaking.

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8. Pending a broadening of scope in the next paragraph, I speak here only of versions comprised of statements and only of the acceptability of what they say, without regard to other ways they symbolize or to such other considerations as relevance. Even within these limitations I am not, despite some passages in *Ways of Worldmaking* that suggest the contrary, proposing to *define* truth as ultimate acceptability.

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THREE TYPES OF REALISM

A typical English eighteenth-century portrait is more realistic, according to prevalent Western usage, than a Picasso showing three sides of a head at once or an El Greco accentuating upward swirls; and a sketch of the Piazza della Signoria drawn according to standard rules of perspective is more realistic than another drawn according to reversed or otherwise transformed rules. Greater realism here does not imply greater accuracy or informativeness. The two sketches may convey exactly the same information, and the Picasso and El Greco supply information the English portrait does not. Moreover, a sketch drawn generally in standard perspective but with several errors is more realistic than a sketch in reversed perspective with no errors; and the pictures that sometimes appear as games with such captions as "Find fifteen mistakes in this picture" are invariably realistic. Realism in all these cases depends upon familiarity; the pictures in the accustomed, standard mode of representation count as the more realistic.

"Realism", though, has another use as well. Practice palls; and a new mode of representation may be so fresh and forceful as to achieve what amounts to a revelation (*Languages of Art,* pp. 37–38). This was true for standard Western perspective when it was invented during the Renaissance, and no less true for modes that broke away from that system, such as the Oriental mode when rediscovered by late-nineteenth-century French painters, and various modes developed by later artists.

Although realism thus may sometimes be associated with revelation, this should not be taken to imply that representation of any sort consists of faithful reporting on 'the real world'. For there is, I maintain, no such thing as the real world, no unique, ready-made, absolute reality apart from and independent of all versions and visions. Rather, there are many right world-versions, some of them irreconcilable with others; and thus there are many worlds if any. A version is not so much made right by a world as a world is made by a right version. Obviously rightness has therefore to be determined otherwise than by matching a version with a world. My relativism, which nevertheless recognizes the difference between right and wrong versions, does not stop with representations and vision and realism and resemblance but goes through to reality as well.

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Concerning the relation between representations and beliefs, I cannot agree with Menachem Brinker[9] that "a distinction between *representing* and *seeing,* between *artistic conventions* on the one hand and *beliefs* on the other" is "a conceptual necessity."[10] Seeing is as relative to symbol system, to conceptual schemes, as variable with habit and invention, as is representation. The innocent eye is a myth long dead. And beliefs, far from standing as independent criteria for judging representations *are themselves versions,* and they interact in various ways with other versions. A belief is an accepted version; an accepted sentential version is a belief; and an accepted representation is to a verbal belief as a picture is to a description. Beliefs are in symbols of one kind or another and are no less 'conventional' than other versions.

Realism is not always a matter of familiarity or of revelation.[11] Hieronymous Bosch's *Garden of Delight,* standard enough in mode of representation, is hardly realistic but is rather, by virtue of its subject-matter, fantastic. Realism of the sort missing here would seem, speaking very loosely, to depend upon depiction of actual as contrasted with imaginary beings, things, or events, rather than upon mode of depiction. A Dürer and a Bracque portrait of an actual person are both realistic in this sense, while even a Dürer drawing of a dragon is not. Where literary works are concerned, this third sort of realism often takes precedence over the others. The distinction between a realistic and an unrealistic story usually lies rather in what is said than in how. The differences that make *Crime and Punishment* more realistic than Grimm's *Fairy Tales* are rather in the told than in the telling.

But there is a catch here. For two reasons, works that are un-

9. The present section began as a comment on "Verisimilitude, Conventions, and Beliefs" by Menachem Brinker, *New Literary History* 14 (1983) 253–267, but developed into a somewhat broader discussion of realism.

10. See also Ernst Gombrich *The Image and the Eye* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 279–287.

11. Consideration of the third kind of realism to be discussed here was prompted partly by a reading of Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, "What Is, and Is Not Realism", *New York Review of Books* 29 (1982) 21–26; and the sequel, "Enemies of Realism", same, pp. 26–33.

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realistic in this third way cannot be identified with those representing nonexistent things, beings, or events.

In the first place, there is nothing that does not exist, no unicorns or centaurs or fairies or dragons to be depicted or described. Strictly speaking, Bosch's painting does not depict monsters, or the tapestries in the Cloisters depict a unicorn; for there are no such monsters and there is no unicorn. Rather the tapestries are unicorn-pictures and the Bosch a monsters-picture. We can as readily sort pictures into unicorn-pictures, monsters-pictures, etc. as we can sort furniture into desks, tables, etc. without their denoting anything and without any available rules or definitions for such sorting. Likewise, Grimm's stories are not strictly tales about fairies (for there are no fairies) but are rather fairy tales.[12]

In the second place, many soandso-pictures and soandso-descriptions that denote no actual soandsos are realistic in the third way; even the most realistic fiction may describe no actual people and relate no actual events. *Rabbit Run* is realistic while *Alice in Wonderland* is not, even though Harry Angstrom is as fictive as the March Hare. Whether a story actually tells of soandsos or is only a soandso-story determines whether it is fiction or history but not whether it is realistic or not. What, then, does make the difference? The answer must again be in terms not of what the pictures and stories denote but in terms of what denotes them, not in terms of how they sort things but in terms of how they are themselves sorted. Just as pictures denoting nothing sort readily into centaur-pictures and unicorn-pictures and monsters-pictures and Northwest Passage maps, so they sort into more comprehensive groups such as mythical-object-pictures, imaginary-landscape-pictures, etc. and into such still larger groups as real-object-pictures and fictive-object-pictures. Real-object-pictures and real-object-descriptions may as in the case of Harry-Angstrom-descriptions be fictive, denoting nothing; and fictive-object-pictures and fictive-object-descriptons may as in the case of a picture of Napoleon as a dragon denote some person or object. A fictional story is realistic in the third way, then, to the extent that it is a real-object-story even though not a story of any real objects. Admittedly, I have no more set forth principles that effect the

12. For further explanation see my *Languages of Art,* I,5.

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sorting into real-object-pictures or -descriptions and fictive-object-pictures or -descriptions than I have set forth principles that effect the sorting into centaur-pictures and unicorn-pictures. In both cases the principles, the similarities and differences that matter, are to be accounted for by the sortings rather than accounting for them.

Realism of the third kind, we are inclined to say, depends on the nature of the subject-matter; but since pure fiction denotes nothing, mustn't such realism depend upon features of the pictures or story, not upon anything depicted or described? Although, speaking strictly and literally, pure fiction tells of nothing, we can nevertheless distinguish between the telling and the told; that is, sorting of fiction according to what is told differs from sorting according to how it is told. In this somewhat oblique sense, the realism here in question depends upon the subject-matter, upon the told rather than upon the telling.

When I say that pure fiction denotes nothing, I am speaking of its literal application. Taken literally, *Don Quixote* describes no one—there never was or will be the Man of La Mancha—but taken metaphorically, *Don Quixote* describes many of us who battle windmills (or windbags). A fantastic allegory, though an unrealistic fictive-person-story when read literally, may be a realistic real-person-story when taken metaphorically.

Realism, like reality, is multiple and evanescent, and no one account of it will do.

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John E. Tashjean

BORKENAU: THE REDISCOVERY OF A THINKER

"Not long after my return from Spain," Gerald Brenan reports in his *Personal Record 1920–1972,*

> I had got to know an Austrian sociologist called Franz (von) Borkenau, who had just brought out a brilliant book, *The Spanish Cockpit,* on the early months of the Civil War. . . . During the next few years Borkenau paid us several visits, and we became good friends. He was the son of an Austrian civil servant and did not learn that he was of Jewish origin until he was grown up. The discovery was a great shock to him, and his reaction to it was to become a Communist and to take employment in the Comintern. After some years of this he became disgusted by the lack of political realism shown by the Party as well as by the total failure of the Russian Revolution to implement its ideals. So he left the Party. . . . He was an uncouth, clumsy man with an absurd moustache and little aptitude for getting on with people. A Nietzschean romantic rather than a Marxist, he always thought, like a Prussian professor, in terms of force and power. In conversations his judgements were often wild, and it was only when he sat down to write that his intelligence and his sense for reality came out. . . . He was a courageous man, as his book shows, but so extraordinarily nervous that he could not sit or walk without continually turning his head to see if he was being watched or followed. We called him "the spy" because he looked like a comic cartoon of one by Hervé.

Here, then, is a psychobiography waiting for its author. Cartoons and thumbnail sketches aside, who is Borkenau and why does he matter?

Not very often the work of a powerfully original cultural historian becomes current a quarter of a century after his death. Although known as the father of Kremlinology and as a historian of communism, few of our intellectuals were familiar with his writings

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on Freud, Pareto, Spengler, Zionism, the philosophy of science, death, and similar subjects. And he received little critical attention.

Now a Borkenau revival may be under way. In 1981, Columbia University published Borkenau's *End and Beginning*—a novel interpretation of the making of Western civilization in a post-Spenglerian perspective. A 1952 analysis predicting the Sino-Soviet split was edited by me in *The China Quarterly* in June 1983. Columbia University Press is now translating Borkenau's *magnum opus* on the formation of bourgeois intellectual hegemony, *Der Übergang vom feudalen zum bürgerlichen Weltbild.*

I.

Franz Carolus Richard Albert Borkenau (1900–1957) is almost invisible in accounts of the Comintern, Austro-Marxism, Frankfurt School politics, and the cold war. This may reflect his heterodoxy and unfashionableness. Yet Borkenau's importance as a political activist is, in the end, smaller than his place in the battle of ideas and the progress of the historical sciences. His chief importance, and his lasting contribution, is in the intellectual *avant garde,* in brilliant books: *Übergang* (1934), *The Spanish Cockpit* (1937), *World Communism* (1938), and *End and Beginning* (1981).

The Spanish Cockpit, which made Borkenau's international reputation, remains a sociologist's *Homage to Catalonia. World Communism,* given the Russian and Comintern roles in Spain, was a logical sequel to it. These two classics established Borkenau as an exceptionally incisive analyst and as a critic of political myths, giving him a running start on Kremlinology in the forties and fifties; and they fitted into ongoing bodies of reportage and scholarship.

Übergang and *End and Beginning* break new ground and constitute challenges to understanding and judgment, requiring a different concentration. Like other European historiosophers of the *haute école* from Vico to Voegelin, Borkenau fascinates us with so many diverse topics—death, the supreme value of technology, the frescoes of San Clemente, Pascal, the Song of Roland, and subatomic indeterminacy, etc., that any discussion going beyond essentials in a brief essay is necessarily arbitrary and distorting.

His life's work and times are sketched on the pages with which Richard Löwenthal, his literary executor, introduces *End and Begin-*

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ning, and which I rounded out in my article in *The China Quarterly.* But an introduction to Borkenau's thought must begin with the milieu of his formative impulses.

* * *

Speaking of the German Communist leaders Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow, R. Zimmermann, in *Leninbund* (1978), says of them that their generation, born around 1890, consisted of professional people or unemployed academics—paid by the Party to be organizers or editors. This applies to Borkenau. How had he come to be a Comintern man and leader of Communist university students in Germany in the twenties?

There is a pithy passage in the second volume of Spengler's *Decline of the West* about the flow of talent from the provinces to the capital which gives life to any tradition of high statecraft. But Spengler did not consider the special case of an ethnically mixed empire, such as the Austro-Hungarian one, where Borkenau was born in 1900.

Coming to Vienna from Hungary and Rumania, Heinrich Pollak and Henrietta Schapira met and married. They were Jewish, but they baptized their firstborn Rudolf Karl Adolf. He had a judicial and academic career and became Franz's father. Rudolf's youngest brother, Bernhard Otto, grew up to become, in Löwenthal's words, "the famous Hofrat Pollak, chief of the political police under successive regimes." This was as important to Borkenau as his father's journalistic success: he co-founded the *Neue Wiener Tagblatt* and pioneered the reporting of court cases. Certainly, Franz must have been influenced by conversations with or between his journalist grandfather, jurist father, and political-police uncle, and by their different foci on public affairs.

Young Franz, whose mother was a Catholic from Frankfurt on Main, attended the Benedictines' *Schotten-gymnasium* from 1910 to 1918. His grades were good, and so was his conduct. As the very name of the gymnasium harks back to the *Scoti* or Irish missionaries in pre-Carolingian Austria, local and medieval themes probably gave some historic depth to familial discussions of public affairs. The *Scoti* show up prominently in *End and Beginning.*

While young Borkenau was completing his secondary educa-

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tion, the wartime ups and downs of Austria must have polarized, or at least upset, the capital including its very considerable population of assimilated and professional Jews. In his volume *à clef Austria and After* (1938), Borkenau notes that Jews, and especially Vienna Jews, were not an element of social radicalism, as had been contended. "After the war a considerable part of the Jewish youth in Austria became socialist because the majority of the young generation was socialist."

When Franz was sixteen his father decided, with an eye on the military draft, that a common name such as Pollak might not be an advantage. So a distant maternal relative adopted him in 1917. Franz Borkenau-Pollak, called up for military service, took a premature final examination at the gymnasium and passed with distinction in March 1918. But the war was over before the year was out, and neither the experience of the trenches nor the officer's ethos ever became part of Borkenau.

Even before enrolling at Leipzig University, Borkenau had broken with Catholicism and his parental upbringing. At the university he started out a socialist but then joined the Communist Party in 1921.

> Now the socialists in Germany mattered little; they were, in 1923, on the downward trend. But the nationalists mattered. So Radek, on a solemn occasion, launched an appeal to them from Moscow, suggesting a common front between communists and revolutionary nationalists. One of the latter, A. L. Schlageter, had attempted to blow up a railway line under French control in the Ruhr, had been caught, court-martialled, and shot. . . . On the basis of this speech by Radek the Communist Party started a so-called Schlageter campaign. . . . (whose) political effect was small. . . . (and in which) the author . . . actively participated . . . and was struck by the self-assured feeling of the young university students of various nationalist organizations, who did not doubt that they were infinitely stronger than the communists; which was only the truth.

So Borkenau recounts the episode in *World Communism.* Also about this time, a fellow student noted that Borkenau gave a mystifying impression of involvement in covert activity. Perhaps some emphasis of Uncle Bernhard's on things political and covert was being applied dialectically.

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Yet in the university Borkenau participated in a seminar highly critical of Spengler and undertook a dissertation on the first English universal history of mankind, George Sale's *Universal History*. But to Borkenau, this was universal only in name; although encyclopedic in factual material, it made no pretense of conceptual integration. This defect is, in fact, the clue to the significance of the work. Borkenau concluded that this work of the middle eighteenth century predating Voltaire's *Histoire des Moeurs* by some years, marks the final stage of the decomposition of all earlier historiography cast in the Christian terms of original sin, the redemptive crucifixion, and the last judgment to come. This theme of decomposition (and reconstitution) of a culture occurs first in the dissertation and recurs with variations in Borkenau's *Übergang* and *End and Beginning*.

In November 1924 he finished the dissertation. After a brief return to Vienna he went to work in Berlin as a staff member of the Comintern office, where he did confidential analysis of political and economic developments in various European countries. Under a cover name, he became chief of all Communist university students in Germany. In 1929, after some travels for the Comintern's West European Bureau, he broke with the Communist Party over its new policy of attacking the socialists and was marked a renegade.

This, as far as one can tell, was the end of his actual political activism except for some "stay behind" or underground plotting, which he did as a member of the *"Gruppe Funke"* of the Austrian Social Democrats in 1933. (It is reported and ridiculed in Buttinger's *In the Twilight of Austrian Socialism* (1953) and also discussed in A. Rabinbach's *Crisis of Austrian Socialism 1927–1934* (1983).)

Martin Jay has suggested in *The Dialectical Imagination* that it was thanks to the Austro-Marxist economist Gruenberg that Borkenau made the transition from Vienna to membership in the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, the home of "critical theory." Along with Karl Wittfogel, he seems to have been something of an outsider. But aside from cliques and personalities, there was an increasing intellectual divergence between the Austrian Borkenau and the others. He was more sensitive to things Italian and approached fascism through its theoretical expression in Pareto. And he accounted for Hitlerian or racial anti-Semitism in specifically "Viennese" terms. These terms, and his neo-Machiavellian interests, seemed incompatible with the Frankfurt Institute's efforts in exile after 1933 to synthesize Freud and Marx.

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Both communism and national socialism were, in Borkenau's view, reactions against the *laissez-faire* order of modern Europe. The resulting concept of totalitarianism, more than a catchall, also gave a polemical point to a civilizational theme, dramatizing the incipient disintegration of the West as constituted in modern times. As Peter Drucker's *End of Economic Man* (1939) shows, such ideas were in the air. In part they represent a secular variation on the charge of "neo-paganism" brought in Catholic critiques of Nazism. Yet Borkenau stands alone in having raised a polemical commonplace to the level of Spenglerian revisionism.

It is worth noting that just as Borkenau's Spenglerianism is antithetical to the arbitrary pieties of Toynbee, so his interpretation of fascism—still anthologized in Nolte's *Theorien über den Faschismus* (1967)—is a rejection of various theories by European socialists and communists. Those schools of thought, basically relying on Marxist immiserization theory and the consequent model of ever-increasing communist strength, defined fascism as a desperate expedient installed by a beleaguered bourgeoisie to ward off the worst. According to Borkenau, this beautiful theory founders on the facts of how fascism actually came to power in the various European countries. As a rule, he emphasized, fascism triumphed not before an imminent revolution but after a failed attempt. The deeper implication of Borkenau's position, according to which both the disintegration and the earlier constitution of modernity turn on the *laissez-faire* order of things, is at odds with the older academic periodization stressing Renaissance and Reformation, as the basis of modernity. Politically and somewhat anachronistically, the Marxist view of modernity as the age of capitalism tacitly excludes what the Clausewitzian idea of modernity emphasizes, namely the era of liberation from empire, thanks to the nation-state.

II.

Löwenthal says that in Borkenau's first *magnum opus, Übergang (The Transition from the Feudal to the Bourgeois World View: Studies in the History of Philosophy in the Age of Manufacture)*

> the highly original questions Borkenau raised were clearly inspired by Marxist sociology, for he tried to show that the structure of society was influencing the categories of thought and thus

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> the directions in which knowledge could advance at a given period; but the book was not Marxist in an "orthodox" sense, since it did not seriously try to derive those categories from the "relations of production," and the references to the "period of manufacture" in its subtitle and opening chapter were superficial and only conceived as an afterthought under "orthodox" criticism from within the [Frankfurt] Institute, to whose inner circle Borkenau never belonged.

The book is unique in social and historical thought after World War I. Borkenau's preface acknowledges inspiration by the Austrian socialist, Otto Bauer, the Russian philosopher, A. M. Deborin, and, most of all, George Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness.*

Early in his section on the antinomies of bourgeois thought, Lukács had considered Descartes' struggle against the medieval outlook. Here Lukács followed Engels who, in turn, had adopted the liberal historiography, exemplified by Guizot and Thierry, of a continuous rise of the bourgeoisie from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. Lukács referred forward from Descartes to Leibniz, whose cosmic optimism had provoked Voltaire's *Candide.* In *History and Class Consciousness,* Lukács also said that he could not go into the struggle with medievalism. Borkenau seems to have taken that as a hint and an invitation. More than half of *Übergang* deals with Renaissance, Protestant, Molinist, and Cartesian antitheses to Thomism, chronologically spanning the centuries from Aquinas to Pascal. And, like Lukács, Borkenau points forward to Liebnizian optimism in his preface. In any case, the *Übergang* is unthinkable without the focus on reification derived from Lukács, and thus seems to be a massive elaboration of Lukács' ideas. It is searching and brilliantly original, yet the literature on Lukács seems to ignore it.

Borkenau's doctoral dissertation had given him an interest in universal history which survived a critical encounter with Spengler. Equally, Dilthey's historiography of science is so much a target that Borkenau says his work is largely meant to refute it. We have here, then, in the *Übergang,* a study defined by its essential affiliation to, and massive elaboration of a lacuna in *History and Class Consciousness,* by its posture as an alternative to Dilthey and by its implicit alternative to Spengler, whose *Decline of the West* also bears on the history of European science and philosophy. No other such work seems to exist, and it is enhanced now that Princeton is translating the complete works of Dilthey.

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In terms of content, Borkenau argues that the mechanistic world view is the world view of the period of manufacture. But production methods of that period, however, contain very few forces making for that world view. How, then, did it come to such a gigantic generalization of experience with manufacturing methods? It is a mere verbalism to say that world views are formed by analogy to processes of production. For no such analogy exists in this case, quite apart from the fact that one would have to show its mediation by the processes of production which, in the period in question, do not eliminate qualitative, organic, and spontaneous features of reality, but encounter them and confront them at every turn. In any case, for Borkenau, manufacture was *not* the typical method of seventeenth-century production, and the manufacturing bourgeoisie was *not* its ruling class. The modest starting point given with the technology of manufacture is generalized *by philosophy* into an exceedingly bold world view, at a time not determined by the development of manufacture. So runs Borkenau's summary of the problem.

Grand philosophical generalization, he argues, would never have taken place had there not been simultaneous forces at work making for a mechanistic anthropology. Not the struggle of man against nature as evidenced by technology, but the struggle of man with the newly developing society is the seedbed of the generalized mechanistic world view. The mechanization of labor as a productive force and of society as a productive relation constitute the triumph of capitalism. As in all periods, however, so in the era of manufacture it is society which brings about theoretical generalization of an idea thrown up by technology, since no world view can wholly maintain itself against the technology of its time. So it was not the sporadic appearance of early manufacture which effected the triumph of the mechanistic world view, but powerful social changes at the turn from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. In France, Holland, and England that era marked the political ascent of the industrial bourgeoisie with the associated gentry. Here, in the last analysis, Borkenau relies implicitly on a role of mercantilism as the alliance of absolutism and bourgeoisie becoming victorious over the feudal nobility.

This drily theoretical statement of Borkenau's position gives no hint of the depth of its scholarship and its vivid evocation of major thinkers and ideas. Comparing Borkenau's work favorably with Lucien Goldmann's *Hidden God* (1964), the late George Lichtheim

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remarked that Borkenau was strongest in conveying a sense of "what it must have been like to live in an age of deep mental distress" (*Concept of Ideology,* 1967).

III

In the years following *Übergang,* Borkenau altered course conceptually and in his research interests. The seventeenth century, no doubt a strategic subject for a cultural historian, allowed him to do his homework on the origins of the modern West. Later in the thirties, Borkenau studied Pareto in order to explicate totalitarianism as the terminal syndrome of the modern West. Pareto, like Marx, had a philosophy of history. It was a vision of eternal return, almost classically Mediterranean, and centering on the interactions between social psychology and the political process. In that scheme, sectarians of all kinds, including Marxist sectarians of progress, are doomed to defeat by overriding long cycles. Borkenau must have come away from the thirties not, of course, uninterested in the Stalinist chapter of communism, but inclined toward the deeper and broader subjects raised by the apparent disintegration of Western civilization; and this in the context of conflicting Marxist, Paretian, Spenglerian, and Freudian interpretations.

In 1944 in a forgotten essay in the *Dublin Review,* Borkenau returned to Spengler; and he revealed the foundations of *End and Beginning:*

> The nineteenth century was substantially divided between two schools of historical interpretation: the one denied the existence of any pattern of historical development; the other accepted such a pattern—but it was invariably a rigid unilineal pattern of progress from aboriginal man to industrial man. During the twentieth century the situation began to change. A few scholars began to see the possibility of a determined pattern of historical evolution which yet need not be a pattern of unilineal progress. "Rise and decline" had been a favourite subject with social philosophers ever since Machiavelli, but for a long time both rise and decline appeared as the accidental results of institutions which could be changed at will. Those who believed in necessary development only accepted rise, and regarded declines regularly following it as untoward incidents not worthy of a theory. Vico, the great Neapolitan of the eighteenth century, whose main ideas were so

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> very near to those of Spengler, is perhaps the only exception. He certainly was the first to conceive of both rise and decline as necessary elements of the historical process. . . . Now one of the first and basic achievements of Spengler was this that he demonstrated, with a great wealth of material, that the nation is not the right sort of subject for developing general laws of rise and decline. The nation is something specifically Western. No other civilization knew it, not at least as the basic political unit. . . . Spengler was the first to develop a firm grasp of the fact that the basic units of history are "civilizations," and that the first task of the philosopher of history is to identify them.

This is vintage Borkenau, going down much better than table wine, but not like the best Burgundy. It is a *monumental curiosity* displaying Borkenau's range, depth, and passion. We have here the sustained *cri de coeur* of a polymath, who would guide us away from the monadic, not to say polygenist, Spenglerian concept of civilizations and towards a vision of humanity beginning to transcend culture cycles. The shadow which falls across this elevating path is the shadow of the mushroom cloud, for Borkenau lived to see nuclear bipolarity as well as the Suez conflict of 1956. The former increased his fears for Western civilization; the latter fit into his Zionist hopes, however qualified they were by his awareness of deep Ashkenazi-Sephardic tensions in Israel. What the Benedictines and the *Scoti* had done in a previous barbaric age, Israel might do in a post-nuclear-war age. So one can sense, in *End and Beginning,* that the psychohistory of the first millennium A.D. served as a gigantic metaphor for working out concerns of mind and heart.

This work of impressive range has also been described by the late medievalist, Professor Dempf, as a study of the Teutonification (*Germanisierung*) of Christianity (in *Stimmen der Zeit,* 1960). It is important, in these hawkish decades, not to misread the work as a highbrow, cold-war treatise. Its emphasis on east-west rather than north-south differences in European culture echoes and generalizes the *Ostmark* or Eastern Marches function of old Austria, which Borkenau had stressed in the thirties in his *Austria and After.* Yet that emphasis falls outside the distinctive core of the work which, by an unprecedented and multidisciplinary method, practically constitutes a major new historical subject. No one could have written this book before Spengler and Freud: for, by a selective synthesis, Borkenau substitutes primal crime, primal guilt, and superego development

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for Spengler's *Ursymbol* as the source and dynamic of civilization. The concern with guilt necessarily involves the quest for redemption and the life of the soul, as evidenced by the dogmatic and ecclesiastical history of the first Christian millennium.

End and Beginning is not a finished and systematic treatise, but a conflation of published and unpublished writings. "The succession of ideas dazzles and sometimes baffles, but nearly every page is arresting," writes Professor Leslie Armour. However, perhaps the book will be buried in silence. It led the reviews in the December 1982 *American Historical Review;* but, by and large, American intellectuals are not famous for devotion to Spenglerian themes and will hardly believe their eyes when they see a revisionist Freudian breathing dramatic life into Pelagius, the Irish voluntarist, and Paschasius Radbertus, the theologian of transsubstantiation. And orthodox Christians may be uneasy about support from a brilliant but unclassifiable author.

Yet, it is clear, that whatever one makes of Borkenau's theses, interpretations, and omissions, his subject will remain. The first millennium A.D. is *fascinating:* nothing like this has happened since Vico. Single-handedly Borkenau pushed a dark and trivialized past close to the central concerns of an age threatened by the thermonuclear collapse of civilization.

For this achievement he was qualified, not to say predestined, by the omens of birth, time, and place. Educated in continental catholicity, he was driven to discovery and reintegration. And what he discovered, ultimately, was the superficiality of the left as well as the right. Two quotes from *End and Beginning* are apropos. "It is characteristic of every paranoiac age—including our own—to believe in the effectiveness of techniques, the knack of reducing problems of the soul to the mechanical arrangement of social factors." "To the materialist interpretation of history, of which the bourgeois historians of the later nineteenth century much more than Marx were the standard-bearers, we oppose another view, which puts man's spiritual conflicts back into the center of the picture."

Here is a world view of depth and seriousness, which one would hardly expect from the person described by Gerald Brenan. The strains of his personality and life qualified and inclined Borkenau to see fundamental value conflict where others might see mere politics. In comparison to the importance of values and value conflicts, it does not matter very much whether his oddity was a psychological

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abnormality, or conduct entirely explainable by high-risk socialist, Communist, or Zionist commitments; or whether abnormality led to and was sustained by the commitments. When all the ambient pressure of his political engagements is accounted for, there remains the achievement of an individual mind: the achievement as a whole cannot be deduced from any one or all of the ideological commitments. By power of understanding he first sought to master and then to reconcile fate. Fate had announced itself when *fin de siècle* theorists of decadence pointed to race mixing as the secret of Roman—and other imperial—collapse. On that canvas of vast scope, Borkenau used twentieth-century colors to paint a panorama seen by a liberal eye.

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BOOKS

ARISTOTLE OR NIETZSCHE?

AFTER VIRTUE: A STUDY IN MORAL THEORY. By Alasdair MacIntyre. University of Notre Dame Press. $7.95.

This is an extremely rare work—a book on moral philosophy which is actually exciting to read. The thesis is startling and very ambitious. MacIntyre claims that the difficulties of contemporary moral philosophy spring from something in the nature of a historical catastrophe: the loss of the context in which alone our moral discourse would have coherent meaning. What we find now are mere fragments of an erstwhile coherent idiom, which we no longer understand. And this is why our moral philosophy is in such disorder.

There are two main symptoms of this disorder. The first is the rise of what I might call subjectivist doctrines of ethics. MacIntyre takes emotivism as the emblematic example. These hold that our moral positions cannot be justified by any objective order but are ultimately simply expressions of our desires, or emotions, or of arbitrary decisions on our part. This is a doctrine hard to hold in coherent form because the very nature of moral claims is to imply that there is some standard independent of the desires or decisions of the speaker. The second symptom is the "insoluble" character of many modern debates (MacIntyre cites the disputes about abortion, just wars, principles of distributive justice), in which rival, incommensurable views square off against each other (e.g., instances of right versus right.)

The contest whose loss so reduces our moral discourse is many-faceted, but MacIntyre singles out what he takes to be the most important strand in it, the Aristotelian tradition. Its importance for him is not simply an historical matter—though it is true that Aristotelian conceptions of ethics in some sense dominated the scene in early modern Europe; it is that he believes this tradition to offer a correct conception of ethical discourse.

What modern understandings of morality lack, since the overthrow of the Aristotelian outlook, is an understanding of the good life, a *telos* or purpose which could be seen as grounded in human nature. This was the necessary objective background against which

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different claims to good and right could be assessed; and it was what allowed different moral principles to be couched in commensurable language, and in some way arbitrated. The two symptoms of our present disorder bespeak its loss.

MacIntyre sees much of modern (post-seventeenth century), moral philosophy as an attempt to make good this loss, using the means to hand. But these are necessarily too meager to make up for it. Once we reject the teleological notion of the good life, we are left, on one hand, with men as they are, and on the other, with the free subject, capable of choosing his own ends, uncowed by the false prestige of Nature. The concentration on the first, that is, on men's passions and desires as they are, has given us various forms of utilitarian theory, and has led some writers to see the basic problem of ethics as how to avoid egoism. The concentrations on the second have given us theories of rational will, of which the most influential has been Kant's. But both kinds of theory are, in MacIntyre's view, manifestly inadequate to the task of justifying objective standards of right. The growing recognition of this inadequacy has contributed to the rise of subjectivist doctrines, such as the emotivism which succeeded the precious and etiolated doctrines of G. E. Moore and Bloomsbury, and more robustly, the cataclysmic fury of Nietzsche. In a sense, the issue about morality could be put starkly as: Aristotle or Nietzsche?

But MacIntyre's discussion is much richer than I have been suggesting. For it is not only carried on at the level of ethical theories and their metaphysical underpinnings. He also wants to show how moral doctrines presuppose a characteristic kind of social background. Thus the world where moral subjectivism becomes dominant, the world in which the moral subject floats free of any objective context of the good, is also the world in which large areas of social relations are given over to manipulation, and in which a certain aesthetic view of the individual as a free consumer of lifestyles is prevalent. It is no accident that the era of the bureaucratic manager and the aesthete is the one where subjectivist doctrines are professed by philosophers, and the writings of Sartre and Nietzsche begin to impinge on the edges of popular culture.

Virtually the whole second half of the book deals with MacIntyre's reconstruction of the Aristotelian tradition, and there he rewrites in a sense his *Short History of Ethics,* weaving together an account of social change and of the rise and development of moral

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philosophy from heroic societies through the classical age and the medieval period towards the modern dislocation.

The account culminates in two remarkable chapters (14 and 15), which give a systematic explanation of the necessary background to moral thinking and action. What the Aristotelian tradition allowed for, and what we have lost, was the notion of a virtue—a characteristic which is both a means to and a component part of a good life for a man. To see how virtues relate to the lives they serve, MacIntyre introduces the notion of a practice. A practice is a "form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized." A crucial notion is that of "internal good"—we can specify it in terms of the practice, and can identify and recognize it through participation. To take MacIntyre's example: portrait painting is a practice, and there are goods in it which cannot be explained without reference to it. The internal goods result from the attempt to show the truth of something like Wittgenstein's dictum: "The human body is the best picture of the human soul." But besides these, the portrait painter may attain a whole host of external goods: fame, wealth, social status, perhaps even power. These are goods which can exist, and be intelligibly sought, even if painting had never come to be a human practice.

This is the first niche for the notion of virtue. Virtues single themselves out, insofar as they are qualities which enable us to achieve the goods internal to a given practice. And MacIntyre makes clear that they must involve more than qualities of individual excellence. By acquiring competence in a practice, and its maintenance through time, practitioners must have qualities such as courage, honesty, and justice, a sense of which also determines their relations with each other.

But how do the virtues related to practices impinge on what we think of as moral virtues? Aren't some of the virtues of practices morally irrelevant, in our ordinary understanding? And couldn't a man's life fall into incoherence because of the incompatible demands of different practices? His thesis is much too rich and difficult to summarize easily. It is one of Aristotle's key ideas, to which he has given his own, extremely interesting justification. The Aristotelian idea is of the necessary unity of human life, so that we can speak not just of *goods,* but of *the* good life.

MacIntyre's twist is to ground this in the thesis that our lives must be understood as having the kind of unity that a narrative has.

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His argument here is strikingly parallel to Heidegger's thesis in *Being and Time* of *Dasein* as essentially temporal, because "being" is at the same time "thrown" and "projecting"; the person has not "chosen" to be born, and yet, one also seeks to "make one's self." We are constrained by our being; yet we seek to transcend it in time. MacIntyre argues that an essential condition of our action is to be intelligible, as much to ourselves as to others, that it be understood in the context of a narrative. So he strongly rejects the view that narrative is something we subject life to *ex post* in art. It is also something we live by. "The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest."

Making sense of my life involves judging between different practices, or at least fitting the different practices into which I am drawn into some kind of coherent whole. As a human being, I cannot be satisfied with the practices offered by my society, but have to look further for a conception of the good life as a whole. And I thus am led to a second niche for 'virtue'. I not only need those virtues which will sustain practices and enable me to attain their internal goods, but also those which will "sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations, and distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good."

To see life in this image of a quest is to admit the possibility of tragedy as built into my predicament in a way Aristotle arguably did not. To be pulled in opposite directions by undeniable goods can constitute tragedy. But this predicament is not just an invitation to choose. The real possibility of tragedy is that rival claims may be both unrepudiable. But there are still, argues MacIntyre, better and worse ways of facing this kind of dilemma, and it is to finding these that reflection on the good is directed.

MacIntyre also sets out the context which made sense of the notion of virtue and whose loss dislocates modern moral discourse. This kind of background is at once intellectual and social—a background of ideas of virtues and of practices. The two are not separable. The virtues attaching to a practice are understandable in terms of its internal goods, and these in turn presuppose the practice, i.e. not just a set of ideas, but socially established ways of acting. Hence some virtues are unintelligible outside of certain social contexts.

All this should help to make clear MacIntyre's striking thesis of the dislocation of contemporary moral thought and its relation to

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modern bureaucratic society when he returns to it at the end of the book. But I remain somewhat uncertain about it, no doubt due, in part, to my own confusions on the subject.

At times the thesis seems to be: modern capitalism, which is now increasingly bureaucratized, has removed the very "concept of a practice with goods internal to ourselves . . . to the margins of our lives." We are forced to function during a good part of our lives in pursuit of external goods; and unlinked by allegiance to common practice, our relations are more and more atomistic and manipulative. Modern moral philosophy is the reflection of this. It stands to modern society rather as, say, Aquinas stood to late medieval society, as a representative formulation of that society's ethical life and aspirations. But this is a catastrophic thesis when combined with MacIntyre's view that this philosophy constitutes mere fragments of a conceptual scheme, that we possess only "simulacra of morality." This would make us an exceptionally unfortunate age in history: *our* characteristic thought is a form of confused incomprehension of ourselves, not really moral thinking at all. Are we that badly off?

MacIntrye indeed seems to think so, as the catastrophe image implies. But at other times, things seem not so terrible. After all, we can still think straight about morals, understand the language of virtues, and its relation to practices. MacIntyre's book helps us to do so again. Thus the modern philosophies he attacks—emotivism, prescriptivism, existentialism—can be seen as bad theories. It is not they who should be related to contemporary society as Thomism was to fourteenth-century Europe, but rather a theory of the kind which MacIntyre himself is developing.

What would remain true on this reading is that modern bureaucratic capitalist society is very inhospitable to the best moral thinking of which we are capable. But this is not all that exceptional a predicament. Aristotle gives superb expression to the morality of a *polis* just as it is going under; and Stoicism, as MacIntyre points out, is a forerunner of modern theories in abstracting the moral agent from his context. This picture of moral thinking against the grain is what MacIntyre evokes with the closing image in the book—our period analogous to the dark ages, and calling for its St. Benedict.

But this too overstates the case. MacIntyre doesn't give much weight to what he from time to time acknowledges; that the modern idea of the free, disengaged moral subject doesn't just arise through our failing grip on the notion of virtue but corresponds to a charac-

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teristically modern vision of the free, responsible subject. This enters into tension with a host of traditional practices. But this is not by itself exceptional; so, for instance, did Christianity in the early Middle Ages with the warrior ethic inherited from pagan times, as MacIntyre argues.

What is new, and alarming, is that this moral vision sustains and is itself sustained by an increasingly bureaucratic society, and that together they foster a neglect and forgetfulness of the background of virtues and practices without which this moral vision itself constantly tends to become distorted and trivialized. On the other hand, it is also true that the new notion of freedom has developed its own practices or modified traditional ones. I am thinking, for instance, of the practices of political self-rule sprung partly out of the tradition of republican government which moderns revived.

MacIntyre recognizes this revival in the eighteenth century but seems to think that it has been totally neutralized. In comparing our times to the dark ages, he states: "This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time." A quip, no doubt. But nonetheless indicative. MacIntyre's critique of modern society and moral thought seems to me very one-sided. Precisely because of the importance of virtues and practices for moral life, we need to see where new ones are arising as well as where old ones are being abandoned and lost. MacIntyre handles the side he does acknowledge with brilliance and insight. Our task is equally to discern and nurture the coherent moral visions of the good life.

CHARLES TAYLOR

THE I AND THE WE

LIBERALISM AND THE LIMITS OF JUSTICE. By Michael J. Sandel. Cambridge University Press. $29.50.

Michael Sandel's book is a critique of a certain kind of liberalism. The version of liberalism that interests Sandel is one "in

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which the notions of justice, fairness, and individual rights play a central role, and which is indebted to Kant for much of its philosophical foundation." Sandel hopes to demonstrate that this brand of liberalism is deeply flawed. In developing his argument, he discusses a number of liberal thinkers, but he is primarily concerned with one important and influential book, *A Theory of Justice,* by John Rawls.

Rawls's goal is to provide an "Archimedean point" from which to appraise the basic structure of society. It is crucial that the principles of justice not be contingent upon existing desires or present social conditions—that would leave the theory open to precisely the sort of criticism often directed against earlier social contract theorists. At the same time, the principles must have some connection to human experience; otherwise, they would simply be arbitrary. Rawl's search for an Archimedean point leads him to design what he calls the original position of equality. In it we imagine a group of mutually disinterested, rational men and women choosing principles under which they will subsequently live. These hypothetical contractees are deprived of all particular knowledge about themselves: they know nothing about their race, sex, wants, preferences, or conceptions of the good. They do have access to some very general information about how societies work, and they also understand that there exist certain "primary goods" that are likely to be useful to a person whatever his or her life plan.

Rawls argues that his hypothetical contractees will necessarily choose a small set of principles of which two are especially important: the equal liberty principle, which guarantees each person the basic liberties of citizenship; and the difference principle, which stipulates that social and economic inequalities are to be permitted only when they improve the expectations of the worst off group in society.

Sandel begins his critique by suggesting that Rawls's account of the original position rests on a certain theory of the person, or to use the term he prefers, a certain theory of the moral subject. According to this theory, we are distinct individuals characterized by separate systems of ends. Each person's identity is "given" in the sense that it is independent of his interests, goals, or relations with others. Human agency involves choice—of ends, interests, conceptions of the good—not self-discovery. On this view of the person, community is a possible aim of antecedently individuated selves, but it cannot be a constituent or an essential ingredient of their identity.

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Sandel wants to argue that this radically individualistic theory of the person is inadequate for at least some of Rawls's own purposes. Most important, it provides an inadequate foundation for Rawls's defense of the difference principle.

At one point Rawls observes that the difference principal "represents, in effect, an agreement to regard the distribution of natural assets as a common asset." But what gives Rawls's contractees the right to make such an agreement? Natural assets, after all, come into the world attached to individual human beings. What gives the parties to the Rawlsian contract the right to treat the talents and abilities of individuals as common property? Why are they entitled to decide that individuals "who have been favored by nature . . . may gain from their good fortune only on terms that improve the situation of those who have lost out"? Rawls's answer to this question revolves around the claim that people are not responsible either for their natural assets or for the way in which they develop those assets; we have done nothing to deserve our abilities or the fortunate circumstances that gave us a chance to make use of them. And so we have done nothing to deserve whatever benefits come from the possession of those abilities. They are, in an important sense, not really ours.

In Sandel's view, this response rests on a mistake. Rawls seems to believe that once we agree that people do not deserve their natural assets, it automatically follows that they do not own those assets. And from this, he assumes, it follows that all individual assets are the property of the community. But as Sandel makes clear, even if the first part of the argument works, the rest does not follow automatically. "To show that individuals, as individuals, do not deserve or possess 'their' assets is not necessarily to show that society as a whole *does* deserve or possess them." To establish common ownership, something more is necessary. What is needed is a theory of the person different from the theory implicit in Rawls. It is necessary to conceive of the moral subject "as a 'we' rather than an 'I'." One must imagine a wider subject of possession, "presumably the community, held to own assets we individually bear."

If Rawls's theory of the moral subject is too individualistic to support his own defense of the difference principle, it is also defective in another respect. According to Sandel, Rawls doesn't recognize that some of us hold "loyalties and convictions whose moral force consists in the fact that living by them is inseparable from

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understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are—as members of this family or community or nation or people, as bearers of this history, as sons and daughters of that revolution, as citizens of this republic." Allegiances of this sort go far beyond the duties and obligations recognized in liberal theory. "They allow that to some I owe more than justice requires or even permits, not by reason of agreements I have made but instead in virtue of those more or less enduring attachments and commitments which taken together partly define the person I am." A person incapable of attachments of this sort would be a person utterly without character or moral depth. "For to have character is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which has consequences none the less for my choices and conduct. It draws me closer to some and more distant from others; it makes some aims more appropriate, others less so." A person with constitutive attachments does not choose his ends or his conception of the good, rather he discovers these through reflection, reflection on the sorts of aims that are appropriate given his history, the community he is part of, the kind of person he really is. According to Sandel, the Rawlsian liberal misses all of this; he fails to understand that some people conceive of their identity as defined to a large extent by the community of which they are a part. This is what Sandel means when he suggests that the liberal fails to account for "certain indispensable aspects of our moral experience."

Sandel's criticisms of liberalism point toward a very different sort of political theory—a theory in which the central role is not played by the notions of justice, fairness, and individual rights. Unfortunately, he does not discuss this alternative in any detail.

He gives only the barest hint of his own vision of the good society. He makes it clear that such a society will not rank justice as the first virtue; that position will presumably be assigned to community, or perhaps solidarity. But it is not easy to get even a rough idea of what Sandel thinks such a society might look like. Sometimes, he seems to be suggesting that a good society will resemble an ideal family, where relations are governed by spontaneous affection and a spirit of generosity prevails in which people rarely feel the need to demand their fair share. (Occasionally one gets the sense that this is what Sandel thinks pre-liberal societies were like.) At other points the author's vision seems less utopian, but difficult problems remain. Could a large, multi-ethnic, economically complex society ever generate a sense of commonality among all its

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citizens? Could deep feelings of solidarity prevail for more than short periods of time among people who have no regular, face-to-face contact? And if community could be achieved under modern conditions, would it be worth the probable costs in terms of liberty and individuality?

Whatever Sandel's position on these issues, it is clear that most existing societies fall far short of his communitarian ideal. What are the implications of his argument for societies like our own? Sandel does not make any systematic effort to answer that question, but his book does contain an illuminating discussion of one contemporary problem—affirmative action. Here he argues against Ronald Dworkin, whose defense of affirmative action is similar in certain respects to Rawls' defense of the difference principle.

For Dworkin, the crucial question is whether affirmative action violates any individual rights—in particular, whether it violates the rights of applicants to be judged according to meritocratic criteria. Having argued that it does not, Dworkin concludes that affirmative action is justified as an effective means to a desirable social end. As Sandel points out, Dworkin is able to reach this conclusion because he assumes "that where no individual rights are at stake, social policy is properly decided on utilitarian grounds." But Dworkin never explains why this should be so. In cases where no rights are involved, why should "the collective ends of society as a whole . . . automatically prevail"? Why should I be asked to sacrifice my interests for the sake of some greater social good?

Sandel believes it is possible to make the case for affirmative action, but only if one adopts a view of the moral subject that is very different from the liberal view. What we need here again is a conception of a "wider subject of possession." When an individual is able to acknowledge that he is indebted to a larger group for the constitution of his own identity, he will view his assets as in some sense common assets; since others made him the person he is, they share in his achievements. (Do they also share in his failures, mistakes, and crimes?) "Where this sense of participation in the achievements and endeavors of (certain) others engages the reflective self-understandings of the participants, we may come to regard ourselves . . . less as individuated subjects with certain things in common, and more as members of a wider . . . subjectivity, less as 'others' and more as participants in a common identity. . . ." When a person develops such an enlarged self-understanding, he will have a different view of the

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use of his assets in a common endeavor. Rather than feeling that he is being used to advance the ends of others, he will see himself as contributing to the purposes of a community he regards as his own.

In short, the argument for affirmative action succeeds only where there exists an "antecedent bond or tie" among the citizens of a particular society. Sandel is uncertain as to whether this condition is satisfied in contemporary America: "It may or may not be the case that the American nation today defines a community in the relevant sense. . . ." But given his discussion of the sorts of ties that are required, this uncertainty is puzzling. For it seems clear that most people in this society do not see their abilities as common assets, owned by the society as a whole. People do see themselves as members of communities (mainly ethnic, religious, or neighborhood communities), and sometimes they may even see themselves as "participants in a common identity." But there is no reason to think that large numbers of people regard themselves as members of a wider subjectivity or participants in a common identity comprising the entire society.

This suggests that affirmative action cannot be justified in the United States today. The necessary bond among citizens simply does not exist. But if I understand Sandel's argument correctly, its implications extend far beyond this one issue; the argument about affirmative action can be generalized and applied to almost *any* redistributive policy. The position that emerges is that policies requiring significant sacrifices on the part of individuals can be justified only where a community in the strong sense already exists. Where people do not see themselves as members of a wider subjectivity, they will rightly regard all demands for sacrifice as efforts to use them as means to advance the ends of others. Sandel never draws this conclusion explicitly, but I think it follows from his discussion of affirmative action. What it means is that redistributive policies will be virtually impossible to justify in precisely those societies where the need for them is greatest.

In the end, Sandel leaves us with two messages. The first is that we should prefer a communitarian society based on sympathy and shared self-understanding to a liberal society based on justice and calculation. That is a message many readers will agree with, though more needs to be said about what a communitarian society would be like. Sandel's second message is more directly relevant to societies like our own. It is that redistribution is justified only to the extent

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that community has actually been achieved. That message seems to me quite wrong. In societies like ours, redistributive policies are morally necessary precisely because we cannot depend on sympathy or spontaneous affection. Community may be a goal worth pursuing. But until we reach it, justice should remain the first virtue of social institutions.

ROBERT AMDUR

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION?

POVERTY AND FAMINES:
AN ESSAY ON ENTITLEMENT AND DEPRIVATION.
By Amartya Sen. Oxford University Press. $17.95

In the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–44, at least a million and a half people died of starvation and starvation-related diseases. Amartya Sen, after reviewing the evidence, concludes that the number of deaths was more like three million.

The mind boggles, and a train of thought suggests itself. In a poor country like wartime India a large part of the population must be living on the razor edge of subsistence. Any substantial failure of the basic food crop—rice in this instance—can tip large numbers of the poorest people into starvation beyond the capacity of any but the most massive relief effort to forestall. No such effort could have been made in 1943–44. The famine was inevitable because there was not enough food.

Yet Sen argues against this account. He shows that the very premise of the food availability story lacks foundation:

> While 1943 was not a very good year in terms of crop availability, it was not by any means a disastrous year either. The current supply for 1943 was only about five percent lower than the average of the preceding five years. It was, in fact, thirteen percent *higher* than in 1941, and there was, of course, no famine in 1941.

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Even after adjustment for wheat imports, carry-over of rice, and population increase, this conclusion stands up. The famine was a social or economic fact, not a natural or agricultural event.

Amartya Sen is Drummond Professor of Political Economy at Oxford and a distinguished welfare economist. Welfare economics, unlike other branches of the profession, is concerned with distribution—of items as specific as income, of indices as vague as "happiness." How does one measure such things? Most economists use such metrics as income and hope these will serve as "proxies" of other attributes. But what of societies where money income counts for less than other forms of welfare?

Sen's preferred description runs in terms of "entitlements." A *person's entitlement set is the collection of "consumption-bundles"* among which he or she is effectively able to choose. In our culture we operate by exchange entitlement: given the resources I own, including my labor, and given the market prices at which I can sell and buy, my exchange entitlement is the set of consumption bundles I can afford, what economists more conventionally call a budget set. I starve if my "exchange entitlement" or budget set does not contain any consumption bundle with enough food to keep me alive. The point of the special term "entitlement," however, is to emphasize that command over consumption-bundles can arise in other ways as well: obligations, social security arrangement, or even looting.

Thus Sen observes that the Great Bengal Famine was primarily a rural phenomenon. There were many deaths in Calcutta but mainly of destitute people from rural areas who had come to the city seeking food. The population of Calcutta was fairly well insulated from the famine by subsidized food distribution schemes, a form of entitlement.

In the end, Sen attributes the scope of the famine (the sharp rise in the price of rice) to inflationary pressure in a war economy, speculation and panic hoarding, administrative chaos, an earlier prohibition of exports of cereals from one province to another, and the uneven incidence of the war economy on incomes, which first hurt agricultural workers especially, and then those who normally lived from selling things to the agricultural population. It was a collapse of entitlement, not a simple shortage of food.

The book studies other recent famines in some detail: Ethiopia in 1973 and again in 1974, Bangladesh in 1974, and the Sahel countries of Africa in the first half of the 1970s. Only in the case of the

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second Ethiopian and, to a lesser extent, the Sahelian drought does Sen find an emphasis on the sheer unavailability of food useful and convincing. Even there, he points out, it is of little or no help in explaining the all-important details. After all, not everyone starved. It is important, both for understanding and for policy, to know who did and why. Aggregate food totals cannot tell us. Sen clearly believes that individual and collective responses to famine are likely to differ according to whether it is regarded as a natural catastrophe or as the consequence of specific social and institutional arrangements.

The first few chapters are entirely different in tone and content. They contain a fairly abstract discussion of alternative definitions of "poverty" and its numerical measurement. Some readers may be put off by these analytical exercises, but that would be a pity. Some abstraction and precision are necessary if there is to be thought on the subject of poverty and starvation, in addition to pity and indignation (and complacency and callousness).

There is a connection between the conceptual discussion of poverty at the beginning and the later analysis of specific famines, but it is perhaps not brought out clearly enough. Much current thought about poverty ties it to the notion of "relative deprivation." There is obvious sense to that. Many twentieth-century Americans and Europeans are regarded indisputably as poor, even though they are incomparably better off and more secure than most landless rural laborers in India. (No doubt there are Saudi princelings much pitied for their poverty in Riyadh, who could buy and sell whole academic departments in greater Boston.) Most of us would regard it as somehow irrelevant to argue that "our poor" should not be treated as poor because there are large numbers of even poorer people far away. But Sen thinks that the emphasis on relative deprivation has gone too far. "(T)here is an irreducible core of absolute deprivation in our idea of poverty, which translates reports of starvation, malnutrition, and visible hardship into a diagnosis of poverty without having to ascertain first the relative picture. Thus the approach of relative deprivation supplements rather than supplants the analysis of poverty in terms of absolute dispossession."

One need only read on to the concrete details of famine to see the point of this. The notion of relative deprivation combines two things—the concepts of poverty and of inequality, and may even confuse them. Perhaps that is its social function: at a time when equality

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has come into bad odor, there may be some point in assimilating inequality to poverty. (The sheer awfulness of the Reagan administration is that it turns its back even on absolute deprivation; having identified the "truly needy" it proceeds to impoverish them further.)

Sen's concern about the numerical measurement or aggregation of poverty is also more than abstract. The simplest and most commonly used numerical indicator of the extent of poverty is a head count; one draws a "poverty line" somewhere and counts the proportion of the population below it. As a measure, it is what it is. But notice that it is completely insensitive to the extent of poverty, in the sense that it would read the same whether everyone were a nickel below the poverty line or far below it; it is completely insensitive to the range of poverty, in the sense that taking a dollar from the poorest of the poor and giving it to someone only two dollars below the poverty line would not change the poverty count. The "poverty gap," the total amount of income it would take to bring everyone up to the poverty line, takes care of the first of these defects, but not the second.

The connection of all this to Sen's main argument is that the incidence of famine tends to be far from uniform, even among the poor. Maybe the Lord giveth, and maybe the Lord taketh away. But from whom, asks Professor Sen, and is it the Lord that decides?

ROBERT M. SOLOW

POLITICAL WOMAN

PUBLIC MAN, PRIVATE WOMAN:
WOMEN IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT.
By Jean Bethke Elshtain. Princeton University Press. $25.00.

Until the "revolution" of the sixties, most political theorists considered the role of women only as a side issue, and if they devoted more than a few pages to the topic of women, it was primarily to define their role in relation to men. In Jean Elshtain's opinion, the principal result of their theorizing was to confine women exclusively to the private aspects of existence. But rather than abolish the family

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and other non-public institutions, as Plato, Marxists, and now certain feminists have proposed, Elshtain advocates only that women become full citizens and that men become more involved in the life of the family—a point of view to which no middle-aged person, male or female, is likely to take exception, since most of us are by now either too busy or too tired to want to change, rather than to work within, the existing structures of society. And, as Elshtain shows, it is questionable whether the most radical theories would come up with anything that would actually improve women's status, unless, like the Amazons, women simply ceased to be female. But, as Elshtain reminds us, most women seem to want to keep the female identity defined for them by clothes designers and fashion magazines.

Acquaintance with previous theory gives Elshtain a perspective other feminist writers generally lack, preferring instead to base their arguments on zeal or outrage. She points out where feminist theorists have oversimplified the issues or simply failed to do their homework. She derides the "liberal" notion that women politicans once in power will behave differently from men—a judgment confirmed daily by the behavior of Mrs. Thatcher and Mrs. Gandhi. She reminds feminist psychologists that doing away with the family and traditional sex roles seems to result in lack of creativity; apparently, one cannot have both complete egalitarianism *and* individuality.

This leaves us (women) almost back where we were before Betty Friedan, et al, gave voice to our suppressed resentments, or at least to our supposed resentments, because I am not sure that I at least resented Saks Fifth Avenue so much as unequal pay for equal work. What will happen to women's role in the eighties? What Elshtain projects, I fear, is academic discussion: "contemporary feminism is alive with competing ways of seeing and contrasting images of public and private realities." Perhaps Elshtain's book has helped to frame the main lines of this new and, one hopes, not too tedious dialogue. But I can't help wondering if she (or the anthropologists from whom she borrowed it) hasn't exaggerated the importance of the dichotomy between public and private in political thought, and hasn't traced it back to a remote past where it has only limited relevance.

Elshtain locates the origin of the public-private split in Greek political philosophy of the fourth century B.C. She criticizes Plato for denying to women guardians in the utopian society of his *Republic*

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their basic function as mothers, wives, and homemakers, by altogether abolishing the private sphere, and by insisting that women and men guardians both retain their privileged positions by telling lies. Aristotle, on the other hand, denigrates women by insisting that they belong essentially where his own society had put them, in the recesses of the home, without right to speak on subjects other than the household and the children. Elshtain embellishes her discussion (and later, her section on St. Augustine) with Greek and Latin words that might suggest that she had read (or at least asked a local classicist about) the original, had she not made certain grammatical mistakes—a first-year Greek student would have known that the plural of *eidos* ("ideal form") was *eidē* (not *eidoi,* as Elshtain has it over and over again). Such mistakes of course don't really affect her argument, nor is it fair to expect everyone who wants to learn about ancient Greece and Rome to take time off to learn their languages, but she might better have reminded her readers (and herself) that anyone who relies on translations is already looking at the world through a modern filter that gives a distorted emphasis to concepts and practices of particular interest in our own time.

A common distortion is the notion that the Greeks were, as Elshtain puts it, "dedicated to misogyny in thought and practice." She cites Philip Slater's unreliable *Glory of Hera* as "evidence." Slater, a sociologist who admittedly did not know Greek, used orthodox Freudian methodology to deduce from Greek mythology and art that Greek males associated too closely with their mothers as boys and so as adults turned into homosexuals and misogynists—a theory that can be sustained only if one ignores the portrayal of Greek families in literature, the utility of homosexuality as a form of birth control, and the very survival itself of the Greek race. Certainly Greek men seem to have regarded women as physically and usually ethically weaker than themselves, but in practice the Greeks were also the first people to express in public the disadvantages of women's predicament. Women are portrayed sympathetically as victims of men's destructive violence, and (like Antigone) as preservers of the continuing values of civilization.

Nor is it accurate to presume on the basis of this supposed misogyny that men belonged exclusively to the public domain and women to the private. As Sally Humphreys has now shown in *The Family, Women and Death,* tension is indeed discernible in fourth century Athens between *polis* ("state") and *oikos* ("household"), though

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not strictly along lines of gender. A man could be both *politēs* ("active citizen") and *idiotēs* (not idiot, as Elshtain has it, but "private citizen"). As Socrates says in his own defense, "anyone fighting on behalf of justice, if he is to survive even for a short time [in Athens], must stay in the private rather than in the public sphere." Not that this, for Socrates at least, meant staying at home, though ordinarily husbands rather than mothers or mothers-in-law seem to have trained new brides to manage their households. The *oikos* and women's role in it were proclaimed publicly on tombstones with inscriptions and sculptures that portrayed the deceased in the context of his or her family. A women could not literally have had her day in court, but her male guardian was obliged by law to defend her if she was wronged. Fourth-century orators and playwrights describe women discussing political issues with their husbands and, on occasion, making formal, reasoned speeches to persuade male relatives.

If by concentrating on political theory outside its social context, Elshtain gives the Greeks too little credit for their treatment of women, by the same methods she manages to give the Christians too much. Certainly Christian leaders from Jesus on placed more emphasis on the individual and the family than had the pagan philosophers, but then they were living under an authoritarian system of government that made active political participation virtually impossible. Elshtain states that "Christ's was preeminently language that met the language needs of the world of women of his time. He spoke their tongue, being the least 'masculine' (if Roman centurians [sic] and Greek warriors are our standard) of men." If true, this assertion would be most appealing; but in fact we have no record in Greek, let alone in Aramaic, of what Jesus actually said, and it would be fairer to compare his masculinity to another rabbi's rather than to a soldier's. Elshtain implies that Christians were the first to offer "principled resistance to secular power," as if there had never been any pagan martyrs, such as Socrates. She might also have considered that under Roman law women, especially of the upper classes, were able to institute divorces and own property. Under Christian jurisdiction they were deprived of these privileges; also, they could not participate actively in the ritual of the Church, whereas pagan women served in many cults as priestesses.

Like other feminist theorists, Elshtain assumes that the present imbalance of power and privilege between the sexes results from long-established attitudes toward women that can now be described,

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understood for what they are, and ultimately changed. Elshtain far less than the others attacks existing sexual stereotypes, but like that of the suffragettes, her vision of the future involves some taming or feminizing of the existing (male) order: "the armies of nonviolence, participatory citizens informed by reconstructive ideals that grant inalienable dignity to human beings . . . are ideally suited for women to join their ranks . . . a reconstructive ideal must fight the enchanting lures of resentment and the poisonous destruction of rage." But what if male dominance, and the aggression that fuels it, is not so much a product of nurture as of nature? The male tends to dominate in most animal species; what if, as Anthony Storr has suggested in *Human Aggression,* "it is highly probable that the undoubted superiority of the male sex in intellectual and creative achievement is related to their greater endowment of aggression"? Storr is well aware that women have been treated badly by society, but also notes, that even when they have been given the opportunity (as in ancient Rome or modern America), they have produced no genius to compare with the great male artists or composers. If male dominance is reduced in the family and in certain other areas, will their creativity also be affected? If women are permitted by society to become more dominant and aggressive, will there eventually be a *female* creative genius?

If anatomy continues to be destiny, whether in this or in some other limited respect, the next phase of "liberation" will require redefinition of psychological realities. A generation ago, women psychologists believed that the conflict between the sexes was caused primarily by women's inferior political status and all that was necessary to bring harmony was to give women equal rights and equal status in society. But, as Elshtain sensibly observes, the time has now come for feminist psychologists to articulate a "coherent logos of female experience." She suggests that the process begin first by questioning the traditional divisions of mind-body and inner-outer originally formulated by Plato and thereafter assumed as "normal" by the political theorists she discusses and, until recently, by most male psychologists as well. Even in classical antiquity, medical science defined women's function in virtually the same ways as society defined it; "normal" or acceptable behavior for a woman meant contentment with marriage, children, and staying home. Irrational behavior in women was thought to be caused by disorders in the womb (*hysteria* means "wombiness"). In the process of describing the role of

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women in terms less crude than Erikson's "inner space," feminist psychologists would do well to heed Elshtain's warnings about the dangers of thinking primarily in categories: women cannot act as a cohesive group any more than can the proletariat. Even today, in the present phase of the movement, feminists pride themselves on their egalitarianism; "elitism" and hierarchies are rejected as structures devised for the advantage of men. But at some point (one hopes soon) feminists will need to address the real distinctions among female individuals. They may even decide, despite Elshtain's misgivings, to accept Plato's notion that only some women were meant to lead, and that these might need to deny themselves some of the traditional perquisites of being female.

MARY LEFKOWITZ

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